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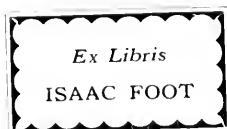
# THE STORY OF THE BORCIAS

JOHN FRYER





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THE STORY OF  
THE BORGHIAS







*Rodrigo Borgia (Pope Alexander VI)  
from the fresco by Pinturicchio in the Vatican.*

# THE STORY OF THE BORGHIAS

BY JOHN FYVIE

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GEORGIAN ERA" ETC

LONDON  
EVELEIGH NASH

1912

PRINTED BY  
BALLANTYNE & COMPANY LTD  
AT THE BALLANTYNE PRESS  
TAVISTOCK STREET COVENT GARDEN  
LONDON

## PREFACE

THE story of the Borgia family has always been one of strangely fascinating interest ; but a lurid legend grew up about their lives, which culminated in the creation of the fantastic monstrosities of Victor Hugo's play and Donizetti's opera. For three centuries their name was a byword for the vilest infamy ; but in our own day there has been an extraordinary swing of the pendulum, which is hard to account for. Quite a number of paradoxical writers have proclaimed to an astonished and mystified world that Pope Alexander VI was both a wise prince and a gentle priest whose motives and actions have been maliciously misrepresented ; that Cesare Borgia was a noble-minded and enlightened statesman, who, three centuries in advance of his time, endeavoured to form a united Italy by the only means then in anybody's power ; and that Lucrezia Borgia was a paragon of all the virtues.

It seems to have been impossible to " whitewash " the Borgia without a good deal of juggling with the evidence, as well as a determined attack on the veracity and trustworthiness of the contemporary

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historians and chroniclers to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of the time. Guicciardini and Burchard, in particular, have been singled out for depreciation and abuse. But nobody is likely to be much disturbed about Guicciardini's essential trustworthiness and accuracy after the ample vindication of him which has been given by Villari in his "History of the Life and Times of Machiavelli." Nor has Burchard's authority suffered in the slightest degree by these indiscriminating attacks. He was Master of the Ceremonies at the Vatican throughout the reign of Alexander VI, and he kept a diary, or rather a note-book, in which he jotted down, not officially but for his own private use, brief memoranda of anything connected with the Pope or the Vatican which came under his observation. Although the details he gives are sometimes highly indecent, and shocking to our modern notions, they do not appear to have been so to him. They are set down without comment; he never imputes motives or makes any reflection on character; he invariably speaks of his master the Pope with profound reverence and respect, and no really competent authority has questioned his good faith.

Of course, it is quite true that we know to-day a good deal more about the true history of the Borgia than was known when Victor Hugo wrote

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his play, and Alexander Dumas his lurid book of "Celebrated Crimes." Thousane, in his complete and elaborately annotated edition of Burchard's "Diarium," Pastor, in his "History of the Popes," Creighton, in his "History of the Papacy," Gregorovius, in his "History of the City of Rome during the Middle Ages" and in his monograph on "Lucrezia Borgia," Villari, in his "Life and Times of Machiavelli" and in his edition of the "Dispatches of Giustiniani," and Charles Yriarte, in his monograph on "Cesare Borgia" (to name no others), have brought forward much fresh documentary evidence as well as thrown new light on the old. To these works, as well as to those of Burckhardt and J. A. Symonds on the civilisation and culture of the Renaissance, no succeeding writer on the period can fail to be heavily indebted. I wish also to express my obligations to William Gilbert's biography of Lucrezia Borgia for many details of her later life in Ferrara; and for many facts in my sketch of Francisco Borja, to the biography of the saint by Father A. M. Clarke, S.J.; although I sincerely hope that nobody will charge that good Jesuit father either with my manner of stating the facts or with any of the comments I have ventured to make thereon.

The present volume makes no pretence of containing fresh documentary evidence or of being

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the result of original research. My aim has been to relate the actions and depict the characters of the principal persons of the House of Borgia in as straightforward and unbiassed a manner as possible after a careful sifting of all the evidence already available. It may be that the last word has not yet been said on the subject : but it seems to be in the highest degree unlikely that anything can now be discovered which can make any appreciable difference in the verdict of history on this extraordinary family.

J. F.

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# I

## INTRODUCTION

WHEN Rodrigo Borgia ascended the Papal throne, as Alexander VI, in 1492, a revolution was in progress throughout Europe. Not only was the old political order changing, but literature, art, science, commerce, and social life were undergoing a bewildering transformation. The history of all this must be sought elsewhere ; but it is impossible to form any just estimate of the characters and careers of the Borgia without first making a brief survey of the social and political conditions which prevailed in Italy towards the end of the fifteenth century. Guicciardini declares that at no time for a thousand years past had Italy enjoyed such prosperity. Her fertile lands, he says, were cultivated to the tops of the mountains ; her population and wealth were abundant ; she contained numerous and beautiful cities ; her various States suffered under no foreign influence, but were governed by their own princes ; she was remarkable for the number of her citizens who were distinguished in politics, in science, and in every noble art ; and within her boundaries was the majestic seat of the Primate of the Christian religion. But there was also a heavy balance on

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the other side, which this eloquent historian omits to mention. The Italian Princedoms and Republics were in a state of perpetual conflict with one another; bands of mercenary troops, who sold their services to the highest bidder, plundered and wasted the country from end to end; everywhere the many were taxed, often to the point of exhaustion, for the benefit of the few; and in addition to the sufferings which the people of Italy had to endure from these causes, they were ravaged by numerous visitations of the plague, which from time to time devastated both the cities and the country districts.

The Eastern Empire had been recently overwhelmed by the conquering Turks, who, firmly established in Constantinople, continued to extend their boundaries, and constituted a standing menace to their Christian neighbours. The Western Empire still existed, but was now restricted to Germany, and shorn of all its power. The independent fiefs and communes of the Middle Ages were tending to disappear; and the great nations of modern Europe were in process of consolidation. France, which under Louis XI had permanently annexed the great duchy of Burgundy, was just on the point of adding that of Brittany also to the hereditary possessions of its crown. Spain, by the union of the crowns of Castile and of Aragon, held the greater part of the Peninsula, and had just driven the Moors from their last stronghold in Granada. The consolidating process, which was also at work in Hungary, in Poland, in



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Scandinavia, and in Russia, seems to have been unfelt in Italy alone, where the five principal States, Venice, Milan, Naples, Florence, and Rome, jealously maintained their independence, and abhorred the idea either of a Republican federation or of a monarchical unity. The only approach to a national league amongst the Italians had been in 1455, when, in consequence of the taking of Constantinople and the dread that Mohammed might soon make his appearance in the Mediterranean, Pope Nicholas V had induced these five States to conclude a defensive alliance for twenty-five years against any foreign foe that might invade any part of Italy. Had any of the other Italian potentates possessed the foresight and sagacity of Lorenzo de' Medici, or even had his life been prolonged for another ten or fifteen years, this alliance might have been developed into something of a wider and more permanent character. Why it was not will become apparent in the course of the following narrative. In the meantime it will be necessary to devote a few words to each of these five States separately.

Venice, satisfied with having defeated her maritime rivals, Pisa and Genoa, mistress of the seas, abundantly rich from her extensive commerce, and fortunate in possessing a stronger internal government than any of the other States, had consistently, if also somewhat selfishly, kept herself aloof from Italian politics until circumstances brought about a change in her policy in the fourteenth century. Then she commenced to extend her dominions in

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various directions. After the fall of Constantinople many islands of the Archipelago voluntarily gave themselves up to her protection; and, having acquired Padua, Verona, Vicenza, Treviso, and other towns on the mainland, she obviously aspired to make herself the dominant power in Italy. This policy aroused the most violent jealousy in all the other States, who would have regarded subordination to the oligarchical Council of Ten as worse than submission to a foreign foe.

But the greatest danger to the peace of Italy at the moment was the state of affairs in Milan. When Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza was assassinated in 1476, his widow, Bona of Savoy, assumed the regency on behalf of her young son Gian-Galeazzo. Three years later, however, Ludovico Sforza, eldest surviving brother of the murdered Duke, taking advantage of the confusion created by the war of Sixtus IV against Florence, had usurped the regency, and having got into his possession all the arms and treasure of the duchy, acted both at home and abroad as its reigning Prince, leaving his helpless nephew nothing but the bare title of Duke. When Alexander VI ascended the Papal throne in 1492, Gian-Galeazzo was twenty-three years of age, and married to Isabella, daughter of Alfonso of Calabria, heir to the throne of Naples, who naturally espoused the cause of his son-in-law and sought by all the means in his power to force Ludovico into giving up the reins of government. It was Ludovico's struggle to maintain his usurped power in defiance of the hostility of Naples that was the immediate

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cause of all the troubles which soon fell so thickly on the whole of Italy.

The Neapolitan dynasty was in scarcely better case than the Milanese. That kingdom, after a long and ruinous conflict, had been conquered by Alfonso of Aragon in 1442; and when he died in 1458, after a salutary and undisputed reign of sixteen years, he had bequeathed it to his natural son Ferrante. The refusal of Calixtus III to recognise Ferrante had forced that able but crafty and brutal prince to reconquer the kingdom for himself. Having accomplished this, he had maintained his power for over thirty years by the utmost oppression and cruelty. Not only were his opponents treacherously entrapped and ruthlessly destroyed, but the fiendish monarch frequently pleased himself by keeping some of the most troublesome of them in cages, like captured wild beasts, in order that he might gloat over the sufferings to which he subjected them. He exhausted his people by ruinous taxation; and as he condescended to trade on his own account, his avarice even went the length of accumulating stocks of corn, oil, and other merchandise, and then forbidding his subjects to sell their stocks until he had obtained a scarcity price for his own. Rebellions, of course, were of frequent occurrence; and as late as 1485 Pope Innocent VIII had aided a conspiracy of the Neapolitan barons which had bid fair to plunge the whole of Italy into war. But although Ferrante's courage and ability might enable him to crush all such uprisings within his

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own dominions, it was obvious to himself, as well as to others, that his power could never survive the attack of any foreign foe; and he lived in perpetual dread of the assertion of the claim of France to the Neapolitan throne.

Florence, whose dominion extended over almost the whole of Tuscany, though nominally a Republic, was practically under the absolute rule of the House of Medici. Lorenzo "the magnificent" had died in April 1492, four months before the accession of Alexander VI. Though only the first citizen of a trading community, without command of an army, and not even legally the ruler of his State, he was in fact an absolute despot, and his foreign policy, hingeing on friendliness with the Vatican and mediation between Naples and Milan, had justly gained him the name of the balancing needle of Italy. His eldest son, Piero, who succeeded without opposition to the high position of Lorenzo, was as weak as he was vicious, and having neither the good sense to follow his father's successful policy nor the ability to originate one of his own, suffered himself to be directed in matters of State by the Roman baron, Virginio Orsini, to whom he was related both through his mother and his wife.

The position of the Roman Pontiff was a rather ambiguous one, and will require to be stated at somewhat greater length. For several centuries the Popes had been striving to secure for the Papacy, in addition to the spiritual domination of the Christian world, the temporal domination of the Italian peninsula. The origin of the temporal

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sovereignty of the Papacy may be traced back to the more or less considerable gifts of estates which the piety of various sovereigns and nobles had induced them to bestow on the Bishops of Rome. As time went on, the aggregate of these estates increased to such an extent that, to say nothing of the possessions which he owned in other parts of the world, the Bishop of Rome, by the beginning of the seventh century could claim to be the largest landowner in Italy. But although Gregory the Great, who was elected to the Papacy by the Senate, clergy, and people of Rome in 590, was forced by the circumstances of his time to assume, and that with considerable success, the rôle of a temporal governor, his successors were by no means always in a position so to act. They had difficulties with the turbulent people of the Eternal City, difficulties with the insubordinate barons of the Patrimony, and difficulties with the successive occupants of the Imperial throne. From the beginning of the ninth century, while the Popes claimed the right to crown the Emperor, the Emperor, on his part, claimed the right to confirm the election of the Pope. About the middle of the eleventh century, Nicholas II, inspired by the formidable monk, Hildebrand, decreed that the cardinals who were attached to the various parishes of Rome alone possessed the right to elect a Pope, thus audaciously withdrawing all elective power from the Senate and people of Rome, as well as repudiating the Emperor's right of confirmation. In 1145 the Roman nobles and people revolted

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against the Papal authority and re-established the Senate. When Lucius II attempted to drive the Senate from the Capitol he was stoned to death. Eugenius III, on his election, not only had to fight his way into Rome, but entirely failed to subjugate the people. But ten years later Frederick Barbarossa accepted his investiture of the Imperial crown from the hands of the head of the Church; and Arnold of Breseia, founder of this twelfth-century Roman Commonwealth, was burnt at the stake and his ashes thrown into the Tiber. To the end of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Popes maintained their independence; but during the first three-quarters of the fourteenth (1309-1378), when the Papal seat was at Avignon, they naturally lost much of the power which they had previously acquired. The Colonna, the Orsini, and other great Roman barons assumed the rule of sovereigns in their immense territories, whilst the Este, the Montefeltri, the Malatesta, the Manfredi, the Ordelaffi, and other princely families became unfettered "tyrants" at Ferrara, Urbino, Imola, Faenza, Forli, and other towns of the Romagna. Towards the end of the fourteenth century Boniface IX recognised the authority of these nobles by giving them the title of Vicars of the Church; and in return for the security of tenure which this conferred upon them they were mostly willing enough to pay him a sum of money down and engage to pay a small annual tribute to the Holy See.

The five Popes under whom Rodrigo Borgia

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served his apprenticeship from 1455 to 1492 were men of varied character and policy. His uncle, Calixtus III (1455–1458), of whom something more will have to be said presently, was devoted to but two objects, the prosecution of a crusade against the Turks, and the aggrandisement of his relatives. He made no effort to extend the dominions of the Holy See, although he risked plunging the whole of Italy into war by refusing to recognise Ferrante of Naples, from the mere desire to obtain a kingly crown for the head of his favourite nephew, Don Pedro Borgia.

Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who as Pius II reigned from 1458 to 1464, reversed the policy of Calixtus in regard to Naples, and even assisted Ferrante with troops when his throne was threatened by pretenders. He was a fortunate opportunist who, though personally averse to any warlike policy, yet conquered all his enemies, and considerably enlarged the States of the Church. He allied himself with the Colonna, and redeemed the towns of Spoleto, Narni, Soriano, Viterbo, Civita Castellana, and Civita Vecchia from the castellans of Calixtus's Borgia. His absence from Rome for nearly two years, from January 1459 to October 1460, was the cause or occasion of a violent disturbance. A band of youthful rebels, under their leader Tiberzio, with the professed object of delivering Rome from the rule of the priests, terrorised the city and compelled the Governor to take refuge in the Vatican. They made alliance with certain disaffected barons of the Campagna, and after

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Malatesta, the Savelli, the Count of Anguillara, and others of their allies had seized on a number of the smaller towns, they all conspired together to invite the redoubtable condottiere, Piccinnino, to march to their assistance for the conquest of Rome. But after Pius's return Tiberzio was captured and hanged; when, with the assistance of Ferrante of Naples and Francesco Sforza of Milan, the Pope was able to drive Piccinnino out of his territories and reduce the revolting barons to subjection. The nepotism of Pius II was as pronounced, though not so pregnant with momentous results to the Church, as that of his predecessor. He elevated several of his relations to the purple; one nephew became Master of his household, another Bishop of Pavia; and of four brothers Piccolomini, Giacomo was made Lord of Monte Marciano, Andrea, Lord of Castiglione della Pescaja, Francesco (destined afterwards to reach the Papal throne) was raised to the Cardinalate, and Antonio, married to a natural daughter of King Ferrante and created a Duke, became a vassal of the crown of Naples.

Pietro Barbo, who reigned as Paul II from 1464 to 1471, was a rather theatrically-minded Pope, who gave the sacred festivities of the Church a splendid but altogether secular and pagan turn, amusing the Roman populace with "bread and circuses." His personal vanity induced him to collect precious stones for the adornment of his vestments and tiaras. On the death of his rival, Cardinal Scarampo, who was also a collector of



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precious stones and other gewgaws, Paul set aside the will in which the Cardinal had left all these to his nephews, took forcible possession of the gold and plate and jewellery which the legatees were attempting to send off to Florence, and had several cartloads of them shot into the treasury of the Vatican. When he died, there were found amongst his personal possessions fifty-four silver cups filled with pearls, together with precious stones and gold and other jewellery to the total value of a million and a half of ducats. At his election Paul II had been forced to sign a capitulation to assemble the Sacred College twice a year, a notable attempt to reduce the Papacy from a sovereignty to an oligarchy which, as might have been expected, proved not worth the paper it was written on. He greatly reformed the administration of justice in Rome; and he showed little inclination to interfere in matters outside his own domain. But his war with certain vassals of the Holy See, when the house of Anguillara was humbled and one feudal lord after another crushed, aroused the dismay of Florence, Milan, and Naples at the growing power of the Papacy, so that they banded together and forced the Pope to stop just as he was about to oust Roberto Malatesta from Rimini.

Francesco Rovere, the son of a poor fisherman, who occupied the Chair of St. Peter from 1471 to 1484 in the name of Sixtus IV, was a more violent and ambitious spirit. At first Sixtus seemed disposed to carry on the policy of his immediate predecessors as regards war against the Turk;

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but his efforts in this direction proving something of a failure, he speedily abandoned them and concentrated his attention on the internal politics of Italy. His nepotism was excessive and scandalous. Within six months of his election he raised two of his "nephews" to the purple, Pietro Riario, generally understood to be not his nephew but his son, and Giuliano della Rovere, son of his brother Rafael. Another nephew, Lionardo Rovere, was made Prefect of Rome, and afterwards married to an Aragonese princess, whose dowry made him Duke of Sora; the price paid by the Pope for this being the remission of Ferrante's tribute during his lifetime, a transaction, as will be seen, which caused much trouble in the future. Pietro Riario was so loaded with rich benefices that his income is said to have amounted to a sum equal to £150,000 of our present money. The sudden rise from the station of a poor monk to such a pinnacle of wealth and greatness seems to have turned Pietro's head, and he plunged into the wildest extravagance and sensuality. When Leonora, daughter of the King of Naples, came to Rome in 1473 to meet her husband, Duke Ercole of Ferrara, Cardinal Pietro Riario entertained her in a style that beggars description. The piazza adjoining his palace was roofed with canvas, and transformed into a pavilion. The foremost artists of Rome were employed to decorate the place, which was hung with silk and velvet and the magnificent tapestries of Nicholas V which depicted the creation of the world. The rooms glittered

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with gold and purple, luxurious couches and soft-cushioned chairs stood on silver feet; and the Cardinal's attention to splendid detail was such that as one of its reporters slyly remarks, the ladies of the Court must have smiled when, on retiring to their sleeping apartments, they found even the humblest utensils to be of silver gilt. On the day after the Princess's arrival, which was Whitsunday, the Florentine actors performed a play or masque in the Piazza Pavilion representing Susannah and the Elders. On the Monday, Cardinal Pietro gave a great banquet, the bill-of-fare of which occupies two pages of Corio's "*Storia di Milano*." And so it went on with unparalleled extravagance day after day. The Cardinal's palace was like the Court of a King, thronged with time-serving artists, poets, and other hangers-on. Pietro got himself appointed Legate for the whole of Italy; and when he travelled he was received everywhere with the honours due to royalty. But his luxury and dissipation and debauchery were so extravagant that in two years he wore himself out; and he died at the age of twenty-eight in 1474, when it was found that, although he had received during the short period of his splendour something like half a million sterling he was overwhelmed with debt. His brother, Girolamo, a customs-house officer, then succeeded to the Pope's favours, who married him to Caterina Sforza, a natural daughter of the Duke of Milan, and invested him with the Lordship of Imola. Another nephew, Giovanni, was married to Caterina

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Montefeltro, daughter of the Duke of Urbino, and, in 1475, on the death of his brother Lionardo, was made Prefect of Rome. In addition to the foregoing, three other nephews, Rafael Riario, and Cristoforo and Gieronimo Rovere, were elevated to the purple.

Such was the fierceness of Sixtus's lust for the aggrandisement of his family that when Lorenzo de' Medici opposed his efforts to secure the supremacy of Count Girolamo in the Romagna, the Pope even condescended to ally himself with the Pazzi in their vile conspiracy to assassinate Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano before the high altar in the Cathedral at Florence. Giuliano de' Medici was killed, but Lorenzo defended himself with his sword and escaped with only a slight wound. The Florentines, in their fury at this dastardly act, retaliated by hanging not only the murderers, but also the Archbishop of Pisa, who was believed to be an accomplice. Then the infuriated Sixtus formed a league with Naples and Siena to drive the Medici from Florence. The city was excommunicated, all property in Rome belonging to its citizens was confiscated, and the Pope, with his allies, marched an army into Tuscany. It was at this moment that Ludovico Sforza took advantage of the confusion to seize the regency of Milan, which Naples and the Pope agreed to on condition that he took their side against Florence. The situation of the Florentines was now desperate, and Lorenzo de' Medici showed the greatness of his mind by carrying out the bold

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resolve of going to Naples, placing himself entirely in the power of his avowed enemy, and endeavouring by mere force of reason to persuade Ferrante to make peace with him. He succeeded, and was received back in Florence with jubilation; but the obstinate and vindictive Sixtus would not come to terms until he was forced into a peace by the Turkish conquest of Otranto.

While danger from the Turk was imminent Sixtus maintained an alliance with Venice for defence against the common enemy; but when the death of Mohammed II set his two sons, Bajazet and Djem, fighting for the vacant throne of Constantinople, and the Turkish army was in consequence forced to evacuate Otranto, the Pope once more turned to his chief interest of advancing the fortunes of his "nephews." Girolamo Riario, already Lord of Imola by purchase, had become possessed of Forli also by the simple process of seizing the place after murdering one of the claimants to the Lordship when there occurred a dispute as to the succession among the illegitimate children of Pino Ordelaffi. But not content with these lordships, the Pope also wished to endow his nephew with Faenza, Ravenna, Rimini, and other towns. In 1481 Venice sought a pretext for making war on Duke Ercole d'Este, and Sixtus lent his aid to the project, evidently thinking that after he had allowed Venice to go as far as suited his purpose, he might be able to step in, and add Ferrara also to the dominions of Count Girolamo. But all Italy was now thoroughly alarmed at the ambitious

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designs of the scheming Pope, as well as at the increasing aggressiveness of Venice, so that not only did Ferrante of Naples send troops to the assistance of his son-in-law, Ercole, but Milan and Florence, together with Gonzaga of Mantua and Bentivoglio of Bologna, ranged themselves on the side of Ferrara. The Pope could not even secure the services of his old ally and captain, Federigo of Urbino, and was obliged to entrust the command of his forces to Roberto Malatesta instead. Moreover, the war with Ferrara brought about another feud between the rival factions of Rome, the Colonna and the Savelli siding with Naples, in whose employ some of them were serving, whilst their hereditary antagonists, the Orsini, ranged themselves under the banners of the Pope. On August 21, 1482, the Papal forces under Malatesta defeated Alfonso of Calabria in the district known as Campo Morto, but such was the pestilential air of the place that the general died of malaria a fortnight after his triumphal return to Rome. Sixtus, of course, was jubilant ; but he showed his gratitude to the man who had won the battle for him in characteristic fashion. Roberto Malatesta's son and heir, Pandolpho, was a mere child, and the sordid Pope instantly despatched his nephew to Rimini in hopes that he might be able to seize on the boy's inheritance. Florence, however, came forward and protected Roberto's widow from this act of Papal greed and treachery. That unfortunate lady lost both husband and father at the same moment ; for on the very day that

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Roberto Malatesta died in Rome, his father-in-law, Duke Federigo of Urbino, died at Ferrara, also of fever, which he had contracted whilst fighting on the opposite side. He was succeeded by his son, Guidobaldo, the last of the Montefeltri, whom we shall hear of again as suffering at the hands of Cesare Borgia.

Three months later, however, Sixtus was brought to heel by the opposition of the Emperor and the threat of a Council; whereupon he promptly changed sides, with consummate effrontery ordered Venice to desist from making war against Ferrara; and, five months later, was found in league with Naples, Milan, and Florence against the ally whom he had so unscrupulously abandoned. In fact on May 25, 1483, he even went the length of excommunicating Venice for continuing to prosecute that war against Ferrara which he himself had been mainly instrumental in instigating. Then Sixtus, with the aid of the Orsini, made a determined onslaught on the Colonna, plundering their palaces and razing their fortresses to the ground with the object of obtaining their possessions for his nephew. Count Girolamo hoped to crush and perhaps even to exterminate the Colonna; but they made a desperate resistance, and the Pope, who was ill with fever, became greatly depressed by his nephew's want of success. Then came a final blow to his hopes; for on August 11, 1484, he learned that, without consulting him, Venice had made peace with the other Italian powers. The unwelcome news threw him into such transports of rage that he died the following day.

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Although none of his ambitious plans were successful, Sixtus IV, as Machiavelli remarks, was the first Pope to show the temporal power of the Papacy ; and it may be added that his Vice-chancellor, Rodrigo Borgia, was the man to mark, learn, and inwardly digest. In spite of his tortuous diplomacy Sixtus got nothing either from Venice or from Naples ; he failed in his designs against Ferrara ; he did not even succeed in crushing the power of the Colonna within his own territory. But he pointed out the way to his successors. It has been said that had the condition of things in his time favoured a French invasion, or had his nephews been of the calibre of the Borgia, his reign would probably have been as disastrous in the history of Italy and of Rome as that of the equally unscrupulous but far subtler man who ascended the Papal throne eight years later. If this were a biography of Sixtus, much would have to be said on the other side ; but we may agree with Mandell Creighton, no harsh critic, when he says that Sixtus lowered the moral standard of the Papacy, and did much to prepare the way for still unworthier successors.

Immediately the death of Sixtus IV was announced, the Colonna, whom he had treated so vilely, flew to arms ; and the Roman populace, who likewise had suffered severely at the hands of his rapacious nephew, sacked the palace of Count Girolamo, and plundered the banks and the corn granaries. Caterina, Count Girolamo's amazon wife, took possession of the Castle of St. Angelo



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and held it on her husband's behalf, whilst he, abandoning his camp at Palliano to the enemy, hurried by forced marches towards Rome. The cardinals were urged to hasten the election of a new pope as the only means of averting civil war. They managed to arrange a truce; getting Girolamo to surrender St. Angelo in exchange for 40,000 ducats, and persuading the Colonna and the Orsini to retire to their own territories. Then commenced a series of intrigues and bargainings for votes. Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia had thought himself so secure of election that he had barricaded his palace to prevent the customary pillage; but the Venetian Cardinal Barbo proved to be stronger in votes, whilst Ascanio Sforza and Giovanni of Aragon, though neither able to secure their own election nor that of any other candidate of their choice, were yet quite strong enough to exclude any one whom they opposed. In this conjuncture, Giuliano della Rovere, whose aim it was to secure the elevation of a Pontiff under whom he might direct the policy of the Holy See, induced Borgia and others to sink their claims and work for the election of the Genoese cardinal, Giovanni Battista Cibò. Palaces, castles, abbeys, legations, and other lucrative offices were accordingly promised to those who would join the party led by Rovere; and Burchard tells us that Cardinal Cibò gained enough votes to render all opposition useless by signing the petitions for favours of this kind which were presented to him during one night in his cell.

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Innocent VIII, who thus came to the Papal throne in 1484 and continued to reign until 1492, having been made pope by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, was completely ruled by that restless and intriguing spirit, at least during the first few years of his Pontificate. The Cardinal soon embroiled the Papacy in a war with Naples by inducing Innocent to demand the feudal tribute which Sixtus IV (for a consideration, as we have seen) had relinquished. Florence and Milan sided with Naples; Venice, and Genoa with the Pope. As, however, the Colonna and the Savelli were amongst the Papal forces, Ferrante was easily able to draw their hereditary enemies into alliance with him; and Virginio Orsini quickly marched on Rome, seized the Porta Nomentana, and placed the Eternal City in a state of siege. But for the energy and alertness of Cardinal Giuliano, who, clad in armour, personally conducted the defence of the walls, Orsini would have captured the city, when perhaps he might even have gone the length of his insolent threat to carry the warlike Cardinal's head on a lance through the streets and throw the Pope himself into the Tiber. After a year's fighting, with much devastation, but little practical success on either side, Innocent threatened to call in the aid of Charles VIII of France. This brought about a compromise; and by the mediation of Lorenzo de' Medici and Ferdinand of Spain a peace was patched up in 1486. Although this peace was in no way a creditable one to the Pope, for he not only gained by it no advantage to the Holy See,

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but basely left his allies, the revolting Neapolitan barons, to the mercy of Ferrante, who exterminated them after his own ferocious fashion, yet it was very grateful to the people of Rome. The city was in a state of anarchy. Murders and robberies were of daily occurrence, and so corrupt was the administration of justice that crimes of the most diabolical character were compounded for a fine. Franceschetto Cibò, the Pope's son, made an arrangement with the Vice-Chancellor Borgia whereby these fines were divided between the two of them in certain specified proportions. When the Vice-Chancellor was reproached one day by some outspoken person concerning the failure of the law to deal properly with criminals who deserved execution, he is reported to have replied in his genially cynical manner: "God desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should pay and live."

The cardinals, whose power and splendour now eclipsed that of the old Roman nobility, promoted rather than discouraged this condition of anarchy. Their palaces, with great pillared courtyards and flanking towers, were to all intents and purposes fortresses; they gave sanctuary to whom they pleased; and each one considered the immediate neighbourhood of his house as under his own special jurisdiction alone. Hence there were frequent frays between the retainers of these proud princes of the Church. Most of them kept several hundred servants capable of bearing arms; in the galleries overlooking their courtyards were

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often to be found hired soldiers armed with muskets, and occasionally even a piece or two of artillery. It is reported that one day when some young Romans had wounded a follower of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the retainers of that prelate sallied out, and by way of retaliation wounded more than twenty people in the streets. On another occasion, when the captain of the Cardinal's Court was arresting a criminal near the palace of Cardinal La Balue, the latter from one of his windows forbade such a proceeding within the precincts of his palace; and when that arrest was nevertheless proceeded with, the French cardinal's retainers were ordered to attack the Court of Justice, which they promptly sacked, after releasing all the prisoners. Most of the cardinals had "nephews," after the example of the Supreme Pontiff, and were surrounded by a court of favourites, parasites, and hired bravoës. They rode in the streets in secular attire, sometimes with swords at their sides; they vied with one another in displaying their wealth and magnificence; and altogether they had attained to such a degree of wealth and power that they threatened to subjugate the Papacy itself. This was another matter that Vice-Chancellor Borgia marked and inwardly digested, with the result that, when his time came, the College of Cardinals was reduced to an assembly of tame and subservient domestic chaplains.

In 1487 Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere fell out of favour with Innocent VIII, and the French cardinal, La Balue, succeeded him in the direction

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of the Papal policy. The first indication of a change was a league with Venice. This was anything but pleasing to Florence and Milan, but before long Lorenzo de' Mediei managed to draw Innocent away from it by marrying his daughter Maddelena to the Pope's son, Franceschetto. This, in its turn, brought about another change, for Maddelena's mother was a sister of Virginio Orsini, and their marriage relationship caused this family once more to regain its influence in the Vatican. Innocent at once made peace with Virginio, who came to Rome ; whereupon Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere found it convenient to retire for a time to Bologna. On April 14, 1488, Count Girolamo Riario, the brutal nephew, for whose sake Sixtus IV had schemed and fought so persistently, was assassinated by some of his own retainers at Forli, who attacked him unawares as he was resting after supper, and flung his naked corpse out of the window. The Forlivese thereupon promptly sacked the palace, and would have handed over the town to the Pope, had not Girolamo's virago of a wife outwitted them, and set up her young son, Ottaviano, as Lord of Forli, with herself as Regent. It was generally thought that Innocent VIII had countenanced this plot in order to acquire Forli for his son, but his complicity was never proved, although it was extremely suspicious that envoys from the conspirators were hospitably received at Rome and that the Papal Governor of Cesena was sent with troops to Forli apparently for their assistance.

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In 1489 Rome witnessed the strange spectacle of a son of the infidel conqueror of Byzantium coming to take up his abode in the Vatican as a paying guest of the head of the Christian Church. When Mohammed II died in 1481, his two sons, Bajazet and Djem, disputed the succession; but Djem, being hopelessly defeated at Broussa, had fled to Egypt and subsequently, in July 1482, sought refuge with the Knights of St. John at Rhodes. Though treated with superficial courtesy, Djem was really detained as a prisoner and held as a hostage for the peaceful behaviour of his dreaded brother, Bajazet, with whom the Knights of St. John opened up negotiations. Bajazet agreed to pay them 40,000 ducats annually for his brother's maintenance, and to preserve peace with them so long as Djem was kept in safe custody. But it soon became advisable to transfer Djem to more secure quarters. There were many candidates for the profitable privilege of entertaining him. The Sultan of Egypt would have been ready to make war on Constantinople on his behalf; he would have been a valuable asset to Mathias of Hungary, who was then endeavouring to drive the Turks from his borders; he would have been equally welcome to Ferdinand of Spain, who was occupied in driving the Moors out of Granada; Ferrante of Naples contended that as he was geographically the natural guardian of the Mediterranean, Djem should be placed in his keeping; Innocent VIII claimed the custody of him on the ground that,

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as Pope, he was the real head and leader of every Crusade. The Grand Master of the Knights of St. John finally decided to send him to France, where he was kept a close prisoner for seven years in one of the strongholds of the Order. About the end of that period, however, the French monarch was badly in want of the Pope's assistance, for only by means of his concurrence would it be possible for the young King Charles VIII to marry Anne of Brittany and secure her duchy. Amongst other conditions which Innocent imposed in return for the granting of this favour was the transference of Prince Djem to the custody of the Vatican. But as this transference could not be accomplished without the consent of the Knights of St. John, Innocent was also obliged to bribe the Grand Master of that Order, Pierre d'Aubusson, by the offer of a cardinal's hat.

On March 13 all Rome was in a flutter to witness the ceremonial entry of the Pope's strange guest. Prince Djem was received at the city gate by the households of the cardinals, by the magistrates of the city, by Roman nobles and foreign ambassadors, with all the honour and ceremony due to a sovereign. An envoy of Bajazet, who happened to be in Rome at the time, prostrated himself on the ground, and, with tears in his eyes, kissed first the hoof of the horse and then Djem's foot and knee. But the Turkish prince sat motionless and silent on the white palfrey which had been presented to him by the Pope, and when the formal greetings were over rode sullenly through the crowded streets of Rome, between the

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Prior of Alverina and Franceshetto Cibò, keeping his face closely covered by a veil. Such was the religious prejudice of Charles VIII that during Djem's residence in France he had refused even to see the "infidel," but no such fanaticism prevailed at the Court of the Vatican. On the day after his entry into Rome Innocent formally received him in full consistory. The Turkish prince had been carefully instructed by Burchard, the Master of the Ceremonies, to throw himself down before the Pope and observe all the ceremonial proper to such an occasion. But this squat - figured, hawk - nosed, one - eyed little "infidel" haughtily declined to behave in a manner which he thought unbecoming in a follower of the Prophet and a son of the conqueror of Constantinople. He did not kneel, or attempt to kiss the Papal foot, but, after an almost imperceptible bow, stepped calmly up to the Pope, turban on head, and bestowed a perfunctory kiss on the Pontiff's right arm. Innocent made him assurances of friendship, promised that his guest should live quite unmolested in Rome, and sent many rich presents of clothes, carpets, hangings, and ornaments to the chambers which had been allotted him in the Vatican. But Djem maintained his impenetrable reserve; and during the remainder of Innocent's reign passed the greater part of his time in his apartments, sometimes relieving his tedium with literature and music, but indulging freely in alcohol, and mostly dozing away the days with ultra Oriental apathy.



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Bajazet was quite willing to go on paying a heavy annual tribute to have Djem kept safely where he could do no mischief, but he would have been even more willing to pay a much larger sum down to have the greater security of his brother's death. Knowing, or surmising this, a Roman baron named Cristoforo di Castrano, who had been dispossessed of his lands by Innocent VIII, went to Constantinople and offered his services for the purpose. His scheme, which presumably was considered and approved by Bajazet, would not only have killed Prince Djem, but the Pope and most of his household also, for it consisted in poisoning the well from which the drinking-water of the Vatican was drawn. Fortunately it was discovered in time; and we can hardly wonder that the miscreant suffered for his intended crime by torture and a peculiarly cruel death. Thenceforth, of course, the daily fear of poison added to the already sufficiently pitiable condition of Djem's existence. Six months later, when Bajazet sent an embassy to the Pope with 120,000 ducats for three years of his brother's maintenance, the ambassador insisted on seeing the Prince, probably only to make sure that he still lived, before paying over the money. The Prince insisted on receiving his brother's envoy in state, seated on an elevated throne, with prelates of the Roman Church on either side of him, and protected by a company of the Palace guards. For further assurance, the ambassador, who had previously been carefully rubbed down with a towel and made to kiss it, was

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then obliged to prostrate himself thrice before the Prince's throne, and to lick all over, inside and out, a letter he had brought, before Djem would touch it with his fingers.

All this time the weak and incompetent Innocent VIII had been indulging in most unapostolical luxury and festivity. He was not the only pope who had been blessed with a family, but he was the first who openly acknowledged them as his own children. He is said to have had a numerous family, but Burchard mentions two only, a son, Franceschetto, and a daughter, Theodorina, the marriage festivals of both of whom in 1488 were celebrated with great splendour in the Vatican to the scandal of all good pious Catholics. Of Theodorina, who was married to a wealthy Genoese merchant, nothing more need be said. Franceschetto, who was thirty-five years of age at his father's elevation, though married to a daughter of the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici and made Lord of Cervetri and Anguillara, remained to the end a mean-spirited fellow without a spark of ambition of any kind. So long as he could obtain money to satisfy his extravagance he was content ; and he had no scruples about the methods by which his money was obtained. As already mentioned, he had made a bargain with the Vice-Chancellor to divide the fines by which criminals were permitted to compound for their felonies. He gambled heavily ; and it is on record that once having lost 40,000 ducats in two nights' play at the palace of Cardinal Riario, he went to the Pope and

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endeavoured to get it refunded by bringing an accusation of cheating. When Prince Djem came to Rome in 1489 this hopeful son secretly promised to hand the Oriental over to Venice (at a price, of course) as soon as the Pope should die; and when in September of the following year Innocent VIII fell ill and was believed to be dying, Franceschetto hurried from his father's bedside to seize the Papal treasury and obtain possession of the person of Djem—a project, however, which was frustrated by the prompt action of the cardinals and by the Pope's recovery. When at length his father did die on August 1492, the gambler sold his territories of Cervetri and Anguillara to Virginio Orsini for 40,000 ducats, and went off to Florence to live under the protection of his brother-in-law, Piero de' Medici.

The last few months of Innocent's reign were marked by entertainments and spectacles of more than ordinary splendour. The year opened auspiciously, for on January 2, 1492, Granada surrendered to Ferdinand the Catholic, and the event was celebrated in Rome by illuminations and bonfires and processions and diversions of every kind, including a bull fight, in which five bulls were slain, the first entertainment of its kind which had ever been seen in Rome, and which was the special contribution to the rejoicings of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia. In March the young cardinal, Giovanni de' Medici, not yet seventeen years of age, entered the Eternal City with a degree of pageantry which presaged the magnificence

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which he was to show after his own accession to the Papacy as Leo X twenty-one years later. In May, Don Ferrantino, son of Alfonso of Calabria, came to Rome to celebrate the reconciliation of Naples with the Papacy; and was entertained by his relation Cardinal Ascanio Sforza with such extravagant splendour that the chronicler Infessura feared a description of it would be found incredible. Towards the end of the same month, an ambassador arrived from Sultan Bajazet bringing as a present from his master the head of the very lance which had pierced the side of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. Although it was pointed out that both Paris and Nuremberg claimed to possess already this identical spear-head, Innocent VIII declared for the genuineness of the piece of iron offered him by the Sultan; and on Ascension Day it was carried in procession to the Vatican, when there was great feasting, and fountains of wine played in the streets through which the precious relic was carried. But all this outside show did not hide the corruption beneath. The Milanese general, Trivulzio, roundly described the Pope as "full of greed, cowardice, and baseness, like any common knave"; and Lorenzo de' Medici, in an admonitory letter to his young cardinal son, not unjustly stigmatised Rome as a "sink of iniquity."

It is important to bear in mind that the perpetual warfare between the five great States, as well as between the other smaller States, of which as yet little mention has been made, was carried

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on by means of mercenary troops, for to this significant fact Machiavelli attributed the ultimate ruin of Italy. After the breaking up of the Imperial authority and the consequent division of Italy into a number of separate States, the burghers of the trading Republics and the Popes of Rome, being unaccustomed to the use and exercise of arms, took foreign troops into their pay whenever they had occasion for them. This soon led to the formation of bands of adventurers who were ready to sell their swords to the highest bidder. Amongst the first of these was a company of men-at-arms led by an Englishman, Sir John Hawkwood, who carried on a number of campaigns in Italy between 1360 and 1394. In the succeeding century the Italians formed similar bands of armed troops amongst themselves, the most eminent of their leaders being Braccio da Montone and Attendolo Sforza. Having no interest but pay and plunder, these men invented a plan of campaign to suit themselves. Infantry would have been useless to them except in much larger numbers than they could maintain, and consequently they limited their armies almost exclusively to heavily armed cavalry, one squadron of which was able to rout a whole army of foot before the use of gunpowder revolutionised the practice of warfare. They protracted their campaigns by endless marching and counter-marching; they seldom killed their opponents; prisoners of the opposing army were usually dismissed without stipulation or ransom; when besieging a town they made no

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dangerous night attacks, and they put up no entrenchments because they feared no sorties ; none of them ever dreamed of such a thing as a winter campaign ; and altogether the soldier's life was made as easy as this system of chess-playing evolutions permitted. Moreover, on the offer of higher pay, almost any one of these condottieri was ready to abandon his employer and go over to the enemy.

Many of these mercenary leaders were men of low origin, whose military ability had raised them to positions of great wealth and power, and whose ambition sometimes led them to endeavour to subjugate for themselves the territories they were employed to conquer for others. Braccio da Montone, one of the most famous of them, usurped the government of Perugia in 1416, and even aspired to found a kingdom. Giacomo Piccinnino, who sprang from a family of butchers in that same town, only failed to establish himself in a lordship of his own because Ferrante of Aragon enticed him to Naples in 1465 and murdered him. Muzio Attendolo Sforza, who was originally a field labourer, became High Constable of the kingdom of Naples ; and his son, Francesco, who succeeded to the command of his troops, having married a daughter of Filippo Maria Visconti, succeeded his father-in-law in the great dukedom of Milan. All of them did not end so fortunately, of course. Francesco Carmagnola, for example, a Piedmontese who began life as a herdsman, having first fought with great success in the pay of the Visconti of

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Milan, went over in 1426 to the side of Venice, when he defeated the troops of Piccinino and Sforza, who were fighting on behalf of his old master. He was made commander-in-chief of the Venetian forces, and endowed with many valuable estates. But when, four years later, Sforza defeated him, the suspicions of his employers seem to have been aroused, and after being received in Venice with all due pomp and honour, he was thrown into prison, secretly impeached, sentenced to death, and executed on the Piazza of San Marco, without any reason being publicly assigned by the Council of Ten. Braccio and Attendolo Sforza, who were originally comrades, found it more profitable to separate their men into two companies, after which, first in the pay of one State, then of that State's opponents, they carried on in opposition to one another all the wars that were waged in Italy during the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

The fascinating and profitable trade of condottiere had been taken up likewise by several of the minor princes of Italy, by the Montefeltri of Urbino, the Malatesta of Rimini, the Baglioni of Perugia, the Varani of Camerino, the Vitelli of Citta di Castello, and also by the Colonna, the Orsini, the Savelli, and other great barons of Rome. These petty despots turned their vassals into trained men-at-arms, and went roving about the country, fighting now on one side of a quarrel, now on the other, seldom killing any of the other mercenary soldiers opposed to them, but often

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ravaging and plundering the cities and country districts they invaded with much ferocity.

The principles of statecraft which governed the actions of all these Italian rulers, both small and great, may be found laid down with incomparable clearness and cynicism in the celebrated *Principe* of Machiavelli. They held that to act honestly and straightforwardly in a public capacity was not only unnecessary, but actually deleterious. A prudent ruler should dissemble and deceive, though always in such a way as to preserve an outward show of goodness. He who played the fox best was always the most successful; and success was the only test of merit. Political assassination became a common occurrence, and was generally regarded as an allowable way of getting rid of a troublesome enemy. We hear of such expedients being coolly discussed and calmly determined on in the Council of Venice. The spirit of pagan individualism which had been resuscitated by the new learning, and the consequent worship of the virtues of the heroes of antiquity, had begot an intense craving for personal "glory." A man must achieve fame of some sort, no matter by what means. The admiration which successful treachery and brutality excited amongst the Italians of the Renaissance is well exemplified by the fact that Machiavelli strongly blames Gianpaolo Baglioni for not having strangled Julius II when that Pope came to visit him in Perugia in 1506. It could not have been piety that restrained him, argues Machiavelli, because the heart of a man



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who had cohabited with his sister and murdered many of his other relations must have been without any scruples of that kind ; it can only have been want of courage ; and in the Machiavellian sense this is want of virtue, for, he says, Baglioni must have known that the whole world would have admired such a daring act, and he would consequently have acquired immortal "glory." Allied with this spirit, amongst the ruling class especially, there was also a degree of sensuality and lust that is well nigh incredible. Extravagance, luxury, and display, particularly in dress, prevailed everywhere, and the example spread from the rich to the middle and even to the lower classes. Gambling was prevalent throughout Italy, both amongst rich and poor. Almost every town framed enactments for its suppression, but with little effect. Sexual immorality was rampant to such a degree that Roberto da Lecce, a celebrated preacher, pronounced the wickedness of his day to exceed that of the world before the flood. Illegitimate children were not only accounted no disgrace, but in many cases were brought up openly together with a man's legitimate offspring. Enea Silvio Piccolomini declares in one of his works that most of the rulers of Italy in his day were born out of wedlock, and states that when Pius II came to Ferrara in 1459 he was received by seven princes, not one of whom was a legitimate son. Nor was this all. Gianpaolo Baglioni lived in open incest with his sister at Perugia. Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini murdered three wives and violated

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his own daughter. A princess of Ferrara was beheaded for adultery with her step-son. Lorenzo de' Medici publicly carried on for years a liaison with a married lady of Florence. A Doge of Venice, Pietro Mocenigo, at the age of seventy, exhausted himself by indulgence with beautiful captive women from Turkey. And the list might be indefinitely extended.

This state of things is plainly reflected in the literature and drama of the time, the indecency of which deserves to be stigmatised in the vigorous terms which Macaulay applied to our comic dramatists of the Restoration. Irregular relations between the sexes was the favourite subject; and it was usually treated with the crudest realism. The Duke of Ferrara and Isabella Gonzaga of Mantua, two of the most estimable characters of their time, seem to have found nothing objectionable in this licentious drama, and were amongst its most prominent supporters. In Rome it was patronised by many of the cardinals; and during the reign of Alexander VI plays of a character which would not now be tolerated anywhere formed a prominent feature in the festivities of the Papal Court. Several of Machiavelli's letters to his friend, Vettori, are so coarse and obscene that to this day no one has ventured to print them. And Gregorovius says he has seen a manuscript collection of poems, made in the time of Alexander VI, in which a series of epigrams begins with several in praise of the Holy Virgin and then, without a break or any word of warning,

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there follow several others devoted to the glorification of the most famous courtesans of the day, the Queen of Heaven and the votaries of Venus being placed side by side as equally admirable women. In all the cities of Italy the *hetairæ* were very numerous. Infessura estimates the number in Rome in 1490 at over six thousand; while in Venice and Naples there appear to have been an even larger number. Smaller towns, such as Ferrara, Perugia, and Orvieto published decrees laying more or less severe restrictions on these women, but apparently without much effect. In Rome they enjoyed considerable freedom. The lower class lived in a sort of Ghetto in the Region Ripa, but there were many who lived luxuriously in splendid houses in the best quarters of the city, and were known by such classic names as Diana, Imperia, Olympia, and Penthesilea. Not only laymen but many of the clergy were infected by this prevalent corruption, which in the College of Cardinals first began to be noticeable under Paul II, increased under Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII, reached its culmination under Alexander VI, and was not amended until the middle of the sixteenth century.

The strange paradox in the psychology of the men of the Italian Renaissance is that while they committed the vilest treacheries and other crimes, while they never hesitated to use poison or poniard whenever it suited their personal ends, while they wallowed in what seem to us the most disgusting and obscene orgies, they yet at the

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same time exhibited a manner of the most polished elegance, and showed an unbounded delight in poetry, eloquence, painting, architecture, music, in everything in fact which is calculated to refine the character and the taste of mankind. Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, is the best known specimen of this type. An able general, as cunning and treacherous as he was brave, dissolute, cruel, and inhuman throughout his whole life, who was burned in effigy by Pope Pius II, who was impeached at Rome for heresy, parricide, incest, adultery, rape, and sacrilege, who murdered three high-born wives on various pretexts one after another, Malatesta always delighted in the society of men of letters and artists; in his intervals of leisure from fighting he read the Greek and Roman classics with enthusiastic ardour; and on his return home from Greece brought back with him, as the most precious relic he could find, the bones of the philosopher Gemisthos Plethon, which he housed splendidly in his own city, induced thereto, as the inscription testifies, "by the great love with which he burns for all learned men." His own enduring monument is the magnificent cathedral church of St. Francis at Rimini, which he employed his friend, Leo Battista Alberti, to erect, whereon may still be seen in the sculpture work which adorns every arch his own cipher together with the initials of his beautiful concubine, Isotta degli Atti.

But if we confined our attention to this strange

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and fascinating type of mind we should be apt to paint the morality of the Renaissance blacker than it really was. It has been well said that the records of all nations consist mostly of the relation of crimes, because while vice and lawlessness always raise a great commotion, virtue usually goes quietly on her way unnoticed and little heard of. The existence of a widely diffused moral and religious spirit amongst the Italians of the Renaissance is indicated by the constitution and conduct of the numerous guilds and brotherhoods of the time, whose objects, though mainly secular, were almost invariably associated with charitable and religious aims. Hospitals and asylums for the poor, also, were a marked feature of the period. No other country in Europe could compare with the splendid establishments of this kind which then existed in Rome, Florence, Siena, Venice, and other Italian cities. Moreover, even art itself, which is so generally instanced to prove the predominance of a pagan and unspiritual spirit, might be cited to prove precisely the reverse, for one careful historian has shown that the proportion of religious to classical pictures throughout the fifteenth century stands in the proportion of twenty to one. Over against the licentious comedies which found such favour at the courts of certain princes and cardinals we must place the pious *Lauds* and the *Sacra Rappresentazione*, which were widely popular. The correspondence of Alessandra Strozzi, a noble Florentine lady of the fifteenth century, affords a specimen of a healthy, moral, and religious family

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life which we are not justified in assuming to have been unique, or even singular. The Note-books of Giovanni Morelli, in which he tells the story of his own life for the guidance of his son, exhibit a specimen, which again we must not assume to have been either unique or singular, of "a model Christian father, whose solicitude for the welfare of his children, both temporal and spiritual, begins with early infancy, and follows them throughout their lives, and even beyond the grave." Another illuminating instance is quoted by Pastor from the Note-book of Giovanni Rucellai (1475-1526), a man who had amassed great wealth in business and was allied by marriage to the Medici family. Towards the end of his honourable career, Rucellai could express himself in the following fine and fervently pious fashion : "I thank God our Lord that He has created me a rational and immortal being ; in a Christian country, close to Rome, which is the centre of the Christian faith ; in Italy, the noblest country in Christendom ; in Tuscany, one of the noblest provinces in Italy ; in Florence, the most beautiful city not only of Christendom, but, by common consent, of the whole world." Then, after thanks for long life and bodily health, he goes on : "I thank him also for success in my business, by which I have been enabled from small beginnings to acquire riches and the confidence of all men ; and that it has been given to me not only to amass wealth honourably, but also to spend it in like manner, which is more difficult than the acquisition of it." "I thank him also," he pro-

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ceeds, "for an excellent mother, who though only in her twentieth year at the time of my father's death, refused all offers of marriage and devoted herself wholly to her children; and also for an equally excellent wife, who loved me truly, and cared most faithfully for both household and children; who was spared to me for many years, and whose death has been the greatest loss that ever has or could have befallen me." This Giovanni Rucellai, it may be added, was also a scholar and a poet, author of two successful tragedies and of some eclogues in imitation of Virgil.

We have recently been told, with confident iteration, that the self-seeking, the intrigues, the treacheries, the licentiousness, and the admitted crimes of Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia are not to be condemned because such regrettable failings were common to all the princes and prelates of their era, that no higher ideal of life then existed, and that it was impossible for any man in high place to conduct himself much otherwise than they did in the miasmatic moral atmosphere of the time. The answer to this is twofold. In the first place, self-seeking, intrigue, treachery, licentiousness, and crime are to be condemned, whether common or exceptional, and whether exhibited in the fifteenth or the twentieth century. Moreover, it is one thing to find some excuse for a criminal on account of his evil environment, and quite another thing to hold up the greatest criminal of an evil time to our admiration, which is what some of the

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Borgian apologists have done. In the second place, it is not true to say that no man in high place could escape the admittedly prevalent moral contagion of the time. Several instances to the contrary might be given; but it may suffice to draw attention to the character and career of one secular and one ecclesiastical prince of that day; to the chivalrous Federigo Duke of Urbino, and to the venerable Cardinal Capranica.

The secular prince is probably the better known of the two by reason of Dennistoun's "Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino," and of J. A. Symonds's sympathetic sketch in his "Renaissance in Italy." Federigo's little duchy, only some forty miles square and consisting mainly of bare hillsides and uncultivated ravines, contained a capital and a court to which the young nobles of Italy flocked, both to imbibe culture and manners and to learn the art of war. Federigo was a condottiere by trade, who was excelled as a general by no commander of his time, and who, indeed, never lost a battle. He did not confine himself any more than other such generals to the service of any one State, although for many years he remained in the exclusive pay of Naples. He acted like a father to his subjects. When, in time of famine, his avaricious paymaster Alfonso made money out of monopolies of food-stuffs, Federigo filled his granaries with corn and sold it extra cheap to his poor dependents. He looked after the destitute, provided for orphans, and made loans to temporarily distressed traders. He was an admirable



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scholar, a patron of the arts and of learning ; he formed a fine library, and filled Urbino with priceless treasures of art. At his Court there was no gambling or swearing, but men, and women also, there conversed with intelligence and sobriety. He kept open hall, but took plain food himself, and drank no wine. At his table it was the custom to have books read out, spiritual works in Lent, at other times the famous classics of antiquity. He was sincerely pious, hearing Mass on his knees every morning, and strictly observing the rites of his Church. He was a good husband, a constant friend, without reproach in his relations with women, and he never failed in the strictest observance of good faith, so that once he had given his word everybody knew that he would stand to it under any circumstances. Yet, notwithstanding all these conspicuous virtues, which we are told the Borgia could only have practised at the cost of their ruin, his duchy flourished and stood secure when those of some other perfidious and unscrupulous princes crumbled away or were overwhelmed.

The history of the ecclesiastical Prince, of which an all too brief account is to be found in the admirable "History" of Pastor, is equally illuminating. Domenico Capranica, who was born in the year 1400, from his earliest youth showed a great love of learning ; and after studying civil and canon law at the University of Padua, continued these legal studies with great zeal at Bologna. He was a favourite with all his teachers,

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and he outstripped all his companions not only in his own special abstruse subjects, but in the study of polite literature also. His modesty was as remarkable as his assiduity; and throughout the whole of his student life he was never known to take part in merry-makings or festivities even of an innocent character. He received his doctor's cap at the age of one-and-twenty; and soon afterwards Martin V, who was a friend of his family, made him a clerk of the Apostolic Chamber. His official work caused little interruption of his studies; and we are told that St. Augustine, St. Jerome, Cassian, and Seneca were his favourite and constant reading. After he had acquitted himself satisfactorily in several difficult matters of negotiation, and distinguished himself both as a leader of the Papal troops and as Governor of Perugia, Martin V raised him to the purple in 1430. Unfortunately, before Capranica could go to Rome to receive his hat and ring, Martin V died; and, as a connection of the Colonna family was obnoxious to the Orsini, who were just then in the ascendant, they were able to prevent his being in Rome for the Conclave. After the election of Eugenius IV, moreover, they managed to prejudice the new Pope against him so strongly that the dignity of cardinal was denied him. They even plundered his house in Rome, and scattered his precious library. Capranica calmly appealed to the Council then sitting at Basle; and although in the meantime Eugenius IV deprived him of his benefices and confiscated his patrimony, so that

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he was reduced to great poverty, yet when a settlement was effected in his favour two years later, he came to an understanding with Eugenius in a spirit of perfect friendliness. Without losing his independence for a moment, or failing to protest against any measure which he considered unwise or unjust, he fairly won the favour of the previously hostile Pope, and not of the Pope only but of the whole of Rome, so that on the death of Eugenius it was generally expected, or at least generally hoped, that he would be elevated to the Papal Chair. The opposition to the Colonna faction, however, was once more too great, and a poor and scarcely known cardinal ascended the throne as Nicholas V. During the eight years reign of this admirable Pope, Capranica filled important offices and discharged difficult legations with conspicuous success, exhibiting all the time a genuine and ardent devotion to the best interests of the Church. On the death of Nicholas V in 1455 it seemed once more as though Capranica would be elevated to the Papacy ; but again there was such a division of parties that Calixtus III was chosen as a stop-gap. During the plague which ravaged Rome in 1456 Capranica alone of the cardinals remained at his post in the infected city ; and he displayed equal courage in another direction by protesting against the extravagance of Calixtus in the endowment of his rapacious and unworthy relations. But the Borgian nephews were too powerful for him ; and his steady refusal to acquiesce in the Pope's appointment of his

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favourite nephew, Don Pedro Luis, to the dukedom of Spoleto aroused such bitter animosity that Capranica was forced to retire almost altogether from public life. Yet such was his reputation for piety, for learning, for decision of character, and for political ability, that on the death of Calixtus III in 1458 he would undoubtedly have been elected as the next Pope, with the approbation of every Roman faction as well as of every prince in Italy, but for the lamentable fact that he fell ill of fever at the same time as Calixtus, and died just as the negotiations for his election were in process of being completed.

His contemporaries are unanimous in testifying that the life of Capranica was that of a saint. Four hours were all that he ever allowed himself for sleep; immediately after rising he recited the Hours, went to confession, and said or heard Mass; then, before granting audiences, he regularly devoted several hours to the study of the Fathers. Although he lived in a palace suited to his dignity, luxury and splendour were conspicuous by their absence; and his own dinner invariably consisted but of one dish. No women were ever permitted to enter his apartments, not even his sister or other relations. He detested court ceremonies, and rebuked those prelates who forsook their churches in order to seek advancement by haunting the Vatican. His own ecclesiastical household consisted exclusively of men chosen for their merit, to whom he showed himself more as a father than a master. He was ever sterner to himself than

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to others ; and his friends were earnestly requested to point out frankly any faults they might discern in him. Never, even in joke, it is said, would he permit himself to utter a falsehood. He was a lover of learning, and the founder of the first college ever instituted in Rome for the benefit of poor scholars—an institution which still exists and bears his name. In this and other ways his liberality and charity were so great that he frequently found himself in pecuniary difficulties. After his demise it was found that all his worldly goods had been bequeathed to the Church, for in his view he was not the owner but merely the steward thereof, and therefore not justified in leaving to his relations what properly belonged to the poor. When he died, just eight days after Calixtus III, the Milanese ambassador wrote to his Duke, saying : “ The wisest, the most perfect, the most learned, and the holiest prelate whom the Church in our day has possessed is gone from us. His whole life was devoted to the exaltation of the Roman Church. He was the pillar of Italian peace, and a mirror of piety and all sanctity.” Had Capranica been elected instead of Calixtus III in 1455, or had a prelate of similar mind and character ascended the Papal throne in 1492 instead of Rodrigo Borgia, the subsequent history of Rome and of all Italy would have been a very different story.

## II

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WHEN the Duke of Ferrara's ambassadors were instructed to learn everything worthy of account in the history of the "illustrious House of Borgia" in order to provide matter for a complimentary oration on the occasion of Lucrezia Borgia's marriage to Alfonso d'Este in 1501, those ambassadors wrote to their sovereign saying that after a thorough investigation into the records of that ancient and noble Spanish family they had been able to find nothing worthy of note before the time of Lucrezia's great-uncle, Pope Calixtus III. And, however undiplomatic such a confession may be considered, it was undoubtedly true; for although the Borgian heralds would have produced with great confidence a complete genealogical tree showing the descent of that family from the old Kings of Aragon, there is really no evidence in support of such a pedigree. The origin of the family is lost in obscurity; and its name first emerges into the light of history in 1429, when Alonzo de Borja, private secretary and intimate counsellor to Alfonso of Aragon, rendered a signal service to the Holy See by persuading the anti-Pope Clement VIII to lay aside his papal trap-

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pings and subside into insignificance as Bishop of Majorca.

Alonzo de Borja, who was born at Xativa in Valencia in 1378, came of a race remarkable for bodily strength, mental vigour, powerful will, great personal beauty, and pronounced sensuality. He was educated at the University of Lerida, where his abilities won him first a professorship and subsequently a canonry. The young priest was evidently a youth of fair promise, for when the Dominican Vincent Ferrer came on a mission to Valencia that great preacher singled out Borja from the crowd of his assistants and told him he was destined to become the ornament of his house and his country, and would rise to the highest dignity attainable by man. Soon after this young Borja appears to have turned his attention to politics, and to have become private secretary to Alfonso of Aragon, afterwards also King of Naples, in whose service he remained for many years and with whom he lived on terms of intimate friendship, rendering great service to the king in re-organising the conquered kingdom of Naples, and taking a prominent part in the most important affairs both of the Church and of the State. In 1429 his services in bringing about the resignation of the anti-Pope earned the gratitude of Martin V, who conferred on him the bishopric of Valencia. In 1444 his powers of persuasion were again brought conspicuously into play when he induced Pope Eugenius IV to confirm the crown of Naples to Alfonso I and to legitimise that monarch's

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bastard, Don Ferrante. Shortly after this, in return for his skill as peacemaker between King and Pope, Alonzo de Borja, whose name had now become Italianised into Alfonso Borgia, was raised to the cardinalate. Nothing of any special note is recorded of Cardinal Alfonso Borgia during the succeeding ten years, but in 1455, doubtless as much to his own as to everybody else's surprise, he fulfilled the prediction of St. Vincent Ferrer.

After the funeral of Nicholas V there were several candidates for the Papacy. At first the tiara seemed destined to descend upon the worthy head of Cardinal Capranica; but his being a friend and connection of the Colonna brought about such opposition from the Orsini faction that it became advisable to pass him by. Cardinal Bessarion then became the favourite; but on invincible opposition being raised to the elevation of a bearded Greek to the headship of the Latin Church, the Electoral College was again thrown into confusion. At length, by way of compromise, they agreed upon the Spanish cardinal Borgia, who on April 28, 1455, was proclaimed Pope in the name of Calixtus III. Alfonso Borgia was admittedly a persuasive diplomatist, a man of first-rate business capacity, and a jurist of considerable repute; moreover, unlike the majority of his colleagues in the Curia, he had led a life free from scandal. In handsomeness of person, in energy of body, in strength of will, and in charm of manner, he seems to have been no less gifted than other members of his family. But



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in several respects his character stands out in shining contrast with his more celebrated relatives. His contemporaries agree in describing him as an old man of honourable and virtuous life. As bishop, and as cardinal, he had declined all other preferment. Pomp and splendour were distasteful to him; but though austere himself, he was indulgent to others. Men of letters, who were disappointed to find that he devoted all his energies and all the revenues of the Holy See to the prosecution of a Crusade instead of to the patronage of learning, have charged him with being an enemy to humanistic culture. It would be truer to say that his absorption in other matters caused him to be indifferent to it. But he was by no means devoid of all intellectual interests. He loved to discourse on legal matters, and showed in his old age as great a familiarity with laws and canons as if he were but just fresh from their study in the University. But he was elected, not on account of any mental recommendations, but because in the existing state of parties the other cardinals thought it well to choose a feeble and inoffensive veteran of seventy-seven who in all human probability could not for long occupy the Papal chair. The Orsini faction, however, were unable altogether to smother their impatience and vexation at the failure of one of their family to secure the Papal crown; and on the day of Calixtus's coronation they broke out into what might easily have become a very disastrous tumult. The ostensible cause of the riot was a quarrel

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between one of the followers of the Count of Anguillara and one of the Orsini, causing high words and blows amongst the excited crowd, whereupon Napoleone Orsini raised his war-cry, and, having speedily collected 3000 men, threatened to storm the Lateran and drag the offending Anguillara from the sacred edifice, notwithstanding the presence of the Pope himself. Fortunately Cardinal Latino Orsini was able to calm the rage of his infuriated brother, and so prevent the coronation festivities of the feeble old Pope from being stained with bloodshed. After this experience Calixtus did his best to keep the peace between the rival factions in Rome ; and feuds during his reign were certainly somewhat rarer than usual. But his nephews never forgave the Orsini ; and by keeping up a close intimacy with the Colonna they naturally incurred the deadly enmity of that family's hereditary antagonists.

But, old and feeble as Calixtus was, there were two objects which he pursued with unflagging energy and zeal throughout the three years of his reign. The first was a crusade against the Turks. Almost his first public act was a solemn vow to Almighty God and the Holy Trinity that, "by war, maledictions, interdicts, excommunications," and all other means in his power he would pursue those foes of the Christian name to the death. His ardour in this one absorbing cause left no room for the carrying on of his predecessor's magnificent scheme for the architectural and artistic adornment of Rome. Nicholas V's buildings re-

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mained unfinished and the workmen were dismissed. The few painters who were retained in the city were no longer required to decorate palaces and churches, but were solely employed in colouring standards to be borne against the Infidel. Men of letters found no patronage; for all the money in the ecclesiastical treasury, all that could be added to it by the lavish sale of indulgences, all that the Pope could raise by the sacrifice of the Papal jewellery, and even by the sale of some of the splendidly bound books of the Vatican library, was devoted to the building of a fleet. And all over Europe his emissaries were despatched in swarms to stir up Christendom to a united effort against the common foe. The energy displayed by this sick and aged Pontiff was amazing; but in spite of all his exertions, Germany, France, Spain, England, all found reasons satisfactory to themselves for holding aloof; and although the heroic John Hunyadi in July 1456 drove Bajazet from the walls of Belgrade, the victory was not followed up by concerted action; and a golden opportunity was allowed to let slip of sending the Turk bag and baggage out of Europe.

As Mandell Creighton aptly remarks, the weakness of Calixtus III left more permanent results than did his strength; for the second object to which the energies of the old man were devoted, the aggrandisement of his nephews, was pregnant with momentous consequences to the Church and to Italy. Calixtus was by no means the initiator of Papal nepotism, which had commenced thirty

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years previously under Martin V, who had so profusely provided his relations with towns and fortresses and estates that the Colonna became petty rulers throughout the greater part of Latium. Neither did he carry his nepotism to such a length as did some of his successors, notably Sixtus IV. Moreover, he was a man of real piety, unostentatious, charitable, and attentive to his religious duties; so that we may readily believe, with Gregorovius, that "could he have foreseen how his blind affection for his nephews was to render the hitherto stainless name of his family a synonym for all infamy in the history of the Church, it is probable that he would rather have banished the sons of his sisters to the darkest dungeons of Spain."

Calixtus's relations were very numerous; and many members of the three allied families of Borja, Mila, and Lançol flocked to Rome in hope of advancement. Three nephews in particular, Pedro Luis and Rodrigo Lançol, sons of the Pope's sister Isabella, and Luis Juan de Mila, son of Calixtus's sister Catalina, were loaded with dignities and favours of all kinds. Their doting uncle adopted them all, and conferred upon them his own family name, in its Italianised form of Borgia, together with his coat of arms, a red bull on a gold field. Within a month of Calixtus's coronation, Rodrigo de Lançol (now Rodrigo Borgia), a remarkably handsome, vigorous and fascinating young man of five-and-twenty, was made notary of the Apostolic See; and a few weeks later was sent off

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to Bologna to study jurisprudence, travelling thither in company with his cousin, Luis Juan de Mila (now Luis Juan Borgia), a youth of twenty, who had been appointed governor of that city. As early as February 1456 these two young nephews were secretly made cardinals. Neither of them had done anything to merit the dignity ; and it was so flagrant a violation of Calixtus's promises on his election that he did not venture to publish their elevation until the following September, when nearly every member of the Sacred College had left Rome on account of the heat. In November they were recalled from Bologna, and made their ceremonial entry into Rome. In December Rodrigo was appointed Legate in the March of Ancona, and Luis Juan, Legate of Bologna, both of them being at the same time richly endowed with benefices. In the following year Rodrigo was made Vice-Chancellor, the highest dignity in the Church after that of the Pope, as well as the most important and lucrative office of the Papal Court. Don Pedro Luis, Rodrigo's elder brother, who was the Pope's favourite, preferred a secular career. He was created Duke of Spoleto, appointed Gonfaloniere of the Holy Roman Church, castellan of all the pontifical fortresses, governor of the cities of Terni, Narni, Todi, Rieti, Orvieto, Spoleto, Foligno, Nocere, Assisi, Amelia, Civita Castellana, and Nepi, and in 1457 was also made Prefect of Rome and put in possession of the castle of St. Angelo. These vigorous young Borgian nephews made hay while the sun shone ; and such was their influence

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with their uncle that any cardinal who showed himself in the least degree opposed to them was promptly got out of the way. Cardinals Capranica, Carvajal and Cusa were sent on distant embassies ; Cardinal Scarampo, much against the grain, was compelled to cruise about the Ægean as admiral of the Papal fleet ; Cardinal Orsini was driven to retire from Rome lest worse should befall him. Most of the others, some from policy, some perhaps from genuine liking, remained on good terms with the temporarily all-powerful Borgia. Adventurers of all kinds, Neapolitans as well as Spaniards, swarmed to Rome and crowded round the wild and splendid Don Pedro Luis, who, though as handsome and graceful and fascinating as any of his race, was not equally endowed with intellect and energy. These " Catalans," as they were popularly termed, secured every civil post in the city that was worth having ; they were insolent and overbearing towards the Roman citizens ; and the management of the police, which was entirely in their hands, became so incompetent or so corrupt that robberies and murders in the streets were of common occurrence. The old and sickly Pope, immured in the Vatican, and engrossed with his Crusade, appears to have known nothing of all this, but to have imagined that his trusted nephews were dealing quite satisfactorily with the administrative affairs of Rome.

One of the fears which had been generally entertained on the election of Calixtus III had been that, in consequence of his long and intimate con-

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nection with Alfonso of Aragon, the affairs of the Holy See would be unduly influenced from Naples ; and the Neapolitan king himself doubtless imagined that he would be able to have very much his own way with his former private secretary. But matters fell out quite contrary to this expectation. Alfonso seems to have offended Calixtus at the outset by trying to make terms concerning his obedience. He asked Calixtus to hand over to him the March of Ancona and other territories of the Church, a request which the Pope bluntly refused. He also requested bishoprics in his own dominions for candidates whom Calixtus refused to institute on the ground that they were too young and ignorant. "Let the King of Aragon rule in his own kingdoms," said the Pope, "and leave the administration of the Holy See to ourselves." Two other matters also served to inflame the anger of Calixtus against his former friend and patron. Alfonso privately aided Piccinnino when the Pope, in conjunction with Venice, Florence and Milan, was endeavouring to drive that redoubtable condottiere out of central Italy. And, what was even more galling, instead of sending his galleys, which had been partly paid for out of the Church's money, to co-operate with the Papal fleet against the Turks, Alfonso had despatched them against Genoa in furtherance of a private quarrel of his own. In March 1458 the Pope's nephews endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation with Naples, but although out of consideration to them the Pope might have given way, Alfonso had by that time

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become irreconcilable. Three months later, on June 27, Alfonso of Aragon died. The very next day Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia was made Bishop of Valencia, and Cardinal Luis Juan Borgia, as well as other relatives, received a number of benefices which had been in dispute between the Pope and the late king. But this was not all. Calixtus at once refused to recognise the succession of Alfonso's natural son Ferrante, and declared his intention to recover Naples as a lapsed fief of the Church. The Pope's objection that Ferrante had no right to the throne because he was not even the natural son of Alfonso was a mere pretext, and came with a peculiarly bad grace from the man who had procured Ferrante's legitimation. As the Milanese ambassador pointed out, Calixtus's real motive was the desire to secure the kingdom of Naples for his favourite nephew Don Pedro Luis, whom in his blind fondness he imagined to be a second Julius Cæsar. On July 14 the Pope issued a Bull claiming Sicily as a lapsed fief, forbidding its subjects to swear fealty to any pretender to the crown, loosing from their obligation any who had already taken such oath, and summoning all the claimants to Rome. He then commanded Don Pedro Luis to levy troops as a demonstration against Naples. Ferrante was not the sort of man to sit still while this sort of thing was going in. The messengers who brought the Papal Bull into his dominions were seized and beaten ; and a congress was immediately summoned at Capua at which the Neapolitan barons were called upon to rally round



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him and repel the Pope's pretensions. Fortunately for Ferrante, he was at once acknowledged as king by Duke Sforza of Milan and by Cosmo de' Medici of Florence, who united in his support out of fear both of the pretensions of the Pope and of the King of France. Nevertheless, a disastrous war would inevitably have ensued but for the death of Calixtus III in the following month. One of his last acts, whilst lying on his death-bed, was to bestow the vicariate of Terracina and Benevento on his beloved nephew Don Pedro Luis, those two cities having indisputably reverted to the Holy See on the demise of Alfonso I. Except for his deplorable nepotism, Calixtus III was not a bad Pope; and he deserves high praise for the energy and perseverance of his resistance to the Turkish power, a matter the importance of which to Western civilisation he alone of all the potentates of Italy seemed adequately to realise.

Anticipating great disorder in Rome as soon as the dying Pope's end should be announced, the Sacred College took measures to deal with it in time. A Commission of four of its members was appointed for the purpose, who first occupied the Capitol with a force of two hundred troops, and then proceeded to treat with Don Pedro Luis. This splendid but not over-brave cavalier, seeing that it would be unsafe for him to remain in Rome after the Pope's death, surrendered to them the castle of St. Angelo and the other fortresses of which he was castellan, in consideration of receiving in advance a sum of 22,000 ducats to which he

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would become entitled under his uncle's will. The Orsini, who bore him deadly enmity, had already begun to take up arms, and they watched every road to prevent his escape. But in the sheltering darkness of the night of August 5 his brother Rodrigo and Cardinal Barbo smuggled him out of the city, when, although he was already so discredited as well as detested that the escort of soldiers with which his protectors had provided him refused to accompany him any further than the Porta del Popolo, he managed to make his way unmolested to Ostia, whence he took boat to Civita Vecchia. Next day Calixtus III died; and the Orsini immediately plundered the houses of all the Borgia and their detested "Catalans." Don Pedro Luis did not long survive his fall. Six months later he was seized with fever, and died at Civita Vecchia, when all his wealth went to swell the already abundant resources of his brother Rodrigo. The two cardinal nephews seem to have been unmolested; but shortly after his uncle's death Cardinal Luis Juan Borgia retired to his distant diocese of Lerida, and notwithstanding the subsequent rise of his family to the highest pinnacle of power in Italy he remained there quietly until his death nearly fifty years afterwards.

In August 1458 there were several candidates for the chair of St. Peter, but a first scrutiny at once reduced the number to two, the wealthy Estouteville, Cardinal-Archbishop of Rouen, who looked upon his election as a certainty, and the subtle and brilliant but poor and powerless Enea

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Silvio Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena. On the second scrutiny, however, it appeared that Piccolomini had more votes than Estouteville, although not the minimum majority necessary for his election. For awhile the whole conclave sat pale and silent, no one on either side venturing to open his mouth, until at length the young Vice-Chancellor Borgia arose and said, "I accede to the Cardinal of Siena." His example, being promptly followed by others, not only placed Piccolomini on the Papal throne, but likewise placed Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia high in favour with the new Pontiff, who was forthwith proclaimed as Pius II.

Little is known of the public life of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia during the thirty-four years covered by the reigns of the four Popes who followed his uncle Calixtus III; but he was certainly more or less in favour with all of them, for he not only retained the numerous lucrative posts and benefices with which he had already been loaded, but added considerably to their number. In 1462 we hear of him as engaged in the superintendence of the fine buildings with which Pius II was adorning his native city of Siena; and in the same year it is recorded that he gave an exhibition of his wealth and magnificence by outdoing all the other cardinals in the splendour of his pageant on the occasion of the Pope's visit to Viterbo. Pius had ordained a grand ceremonial observance of Corpus Christi Day; and each cardinal undertook the decoration of part of the road to the cathedral. One cardinal gave a representation of the Last Supper; another

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of a choir of angels ; another of a dragon surrounded by demons, whose head was cut off by the descending Archangel Michael at the moment the Pope passed by. But Cardinal Borgia's pageant eclipsed them all. He had erected a large purple tent across the road leading to the cathedral. When the Pope approached, two angels advanced and knelt in reverence to the Host, which was carried by his Holiness ; then, turning towards the tent, they sang, " Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that King Pius, lord of the world, may come in." On this, five kings, accompanied by a band of armed men, came out to bar his entrance, crying, " Who is King Pius ? " Then the angels shouted in reply, " The Lord strong and mighty ! " whereupon the curtain fell, and the kings with their troops knelt before the Pope, singing songs to his honour to the accompaniment of a band of musicians.

When Pius II died two years later at Ancona, whither he had gone to stir up enthusiasm for his crusade against the Turk, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who had accompanied the Holy Father, was also stricken with fever. On his return to Rome he appeared in the Conclave with his head bound up ; and on account of his indisposition he was unable to perform the ceremony of crowning Pietro Barbo, who was unanimously elected Pope on August 30, 1464, and proclaimed as Paul II. Cardinal Borgia appears to have retained the favour of Paul II throughout the seven years of his reign, but his name does not come into prominence until on the sudden death of Paul in 1471 he was able

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once more to take the initiative in a Papal election. Bessarion, the Greek, for the second time in his life, became the favourite candidate, his age, which was verging on seventy, rendering him all the more acceptable as being likely to lead to another vacancy within a short time. But Rodrigo Borgia, backed by the Cardinals Orsini and Gonzaga, set up a competitor in the person of Francesco della Rovere, a man of low birth but high character and great learning; and they succeeded in carrying their candidate, who was duly crowned on August 25 in the name of Sixtus IV. Della Rovere's supporters, of course, looked for their appropriate rewards; and to Rodrigo Borgia's share fell the rich abbey of Subiaco. The Pope, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, urged upon Christendom the duty of a united war against the Turk, for which purpose Barbo was sent as Legate to Germany, Bessarion to France, and Borgia to Spain. None of them met with any success as regards the special object of their mission; but Rodrigo Borgia seized the opportunity to display himself magnificently in his native Valencia, and to form connections with the Spanish court which were afterwards useful to him. After an absence of about fifteen months he made his will and set out on his return journey to Rome on September 11, 1473. Off the coast of Pisa his galleys encountered a fearful storm which sank one of them. Property to the value of 30,000 florins was lost, and more than two hundred persons of his suite, including three bishops, were drowned.

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The galley in which the Cardinal Legate travelled only narrowly escaped the same fate; and one may perhaps be permitted to wonder whether it would not have been much better for Italy and the Roman Church if this vessel had foundered instead of the other. During the following ten years little is recorded of Cardinal Rodrigo, except that he completed the building of his huge Palazzo Borgia, which soon became celebrated as one of the finest palaces in Italy, and which he adorned with sumptuous furniture, costly tapestries and carpets, with marvels of artistic workmanship in gold, silver and bronze, with fine specimens of antique statuary, superb armour, gorgeous plate, fine books, and in fact with every splendid luxury within the reach of the wealthiest prince of this time.

On the death of Sixtus IV in 1484 Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, then fifty-three years of age, Vice-Chancellor of the Church, and possessed of enormous wealth from the revenues of his numerous benefices, thought himself so secure of election that he had his palace barricaded to prevent that pillage by the mob which always took place on such occasions. But he had miscalculated the strength of his support; and after the first scrutiny he and his bitter rival, Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, united their forces in order to prevent the election of the Venetian cardinal, Barbo, and to secure that of the Genoese cardinal, Cibò, who on August 29 was proclaimed as Innocent VIII. During the eight years of Innocent's pontificate

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Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia seems to have occupied himself mainly in husbanding his wealth and consolidating his friendships in preparation for the next struggle.

Of Rodrigo Borgia's private life during the period of his cardinalate the details, though meagre, are illuminating. Our first glimpse of it is afforded by an admonitory letter in which his friend Pius II reproved him for dissolute conduct in Siena in the summer of 1460. Pius had learned that Borgia, in company with another ecclesiastic, had spent five hours at a bacchanalian orgy in a certain private garden in Siena to which had been invited a number of ladies of questionable character. Shame forbids mention of all that took place, says the Pope, but he mentions that wanton dancing was a prominent feature of the entertainment, that no amorous allurements were lacking, and that the husbands, fathers, brothers and other kinsmen of the young women and girls were not invited to be present in order that there might be no restraint. Such conduct displeased the Pope beyond words; and Borgia was not only admonished to remember that as bishop of the premier see in Spain, as cardinal, and as Vice-Chancellor of the Church, it behoved him to be above reproach and exhibit an example of right living in the sight of all men; but he was also informed pretty plainly that should such a scandalous exhibition occur again he would have to be rebuked in a more open and peremptory manner. However indisposed the libidinous cardinal may have been to curb his insatiable sensuality, we

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may assume, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, that he gave no further public and ostentatious examples of it at any rate during the lifetime of Pius II. But everybody knew that Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia thought little of his priestly vow of chastity. A contemporary historian, Gasparino of Verona, describes him as "a handsome man, with a pleasant look and a honeyed tongue, who lures women to love him, and attracts those on whom he casts his eyes more powerfully than the magnet draws iron." At least half a dozen of his children were openly acknowledged as such. Of his eldest son, Pedro Luis, born of an unknown mother about 1460, little more is known than that after being educated as befitted the son of a prince, his father's wealth and influence in Spain procured for him the dukedom of Gandia; that the young Duke distinguished himself as a soldier in the war against the Moors in Granada; and that when he died, at the age of thirty or thereabout, he was betrothed to a princess of the royal House of Aragon. Even more meagre is our information concerning a daughter, named Girolama, who was born, either of the same or of another unknown mother, in 1467, and who at the age of fifteen was married to Don Giovandrea Cesarini, a scion of one of the baronial houses of Rome. And there was another daughter, named Isabella, who was married in 1483 to a Roman noble named Mattuzi.

But in addition to these children, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia had four others who were all the offspring of a Roman lady named Vanozza de



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Catanei ; namely, Giovanni, born in 1474 ; Cesare, born in 1475 or 1476 ; Lucrezia, who was born (most probably) in 1480 ; and Giuffré, who was born in 1481. Who and what manner of woman Vanozza de Catanei was is almost entirely a matter of conjecture. No authentic portrait of her exists, nor has her appearance been described by any of her contemporaries. We may confidently assume that she was of more than ordinary beauty, or she would not have attracted Rodrigo Borgia. We may also confidently assume, with Gregorovius, that although perhaps of no great culture, she must have been a woman of some intellectual as well as physical vigour, or she would not have retained the Cardinal's affection so long as she did. At what date the connection began is also a matter of conjecture. Some historians have endeavoured to fix it at about the year 1460 ; but a consideration of all the evidence available seems to render it much more probable that the liaison did not begin before 1473, after Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia's return from his legation to Spain, when he was forty-two years of age and Vanozza thirty-one. In 1480 we hear of her as living in a house on the Piazza Branca, not far from the Borgia palace, and known as the wife of Giorgio Croce, a Milanese for whom Cardinal Rodrigo had obtained a post as Apostolic secretary. There appears to have been little secrecy concerning Borgia's relations with her, and her four children already mentioned were openly acknowledged, brought up, and educated as the Cardinal's own. When,

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however, Vanozza's husband, Giorgio di Croce, died early in 1486, the Cardinal's ardour seems to have cooled ; for, having already provided her with ample means of subsistence, he married her off in June of the same year to a Mantuan named Carlo Canale ; and then, after the manner of his kind, entered into more intimate relations with younger women.

What influence Vanozza was allowed to have in the rearing and education of her children does not appear. They all evidently remained on very good terms with her to the end of their lives ; and the inscription on her tombstone shows that she was proud of her distinguished progeny. But Lucrezia at least was removed from her care in early childhood, and brought up under the tuition of Cardinal Rodrigo's cousin, Adriana da Mila, widow of Ludovico Orsini, who lived with her only son, Orsino Orsini, a boy some seven years older than Lucretia, in the Orsini palace on Monte Giordano. The kind of woman Madonna Adriana was, and the pernicious influence she was likely to exercise on the character of the young girl committed to her charge, may be judged of from her conduct in another matter. Her son Orsino had been betrothed before the death of his father to Giulia Farnese, youngest daughter of Pierluigi Farnese, who also, like the boy's father, had since died. On May 21, 1489, when Giulia was barely fifteen, and Orsino probably not more than a year older, the young couple were duly married in the Palazzo Borgia, amidst great splendour and rejoicing.

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Young girls develop early under Italian skies, and the golden-haired Giulia, probably at that time in the full bloom of her marvellous beauty, aroused the passions of Cardinal Borgia, who, though close upon sixty years of age, brought into play those fascinating manners and seductive arts for which he was so famous, with the result that Giulia soon became his acknowledged mistress. Of course this could never have happened but for the concurrence and connivance of Madonna Adriana, whose assistance in this and other equally shameful proceedings of her powerful kinsman made her his intimate confidant, and consequently one of the most influential women in Rome.

Venozza's three sons were brought up and educated as the sons of a prince. When Pedro Luis Borgia died, about the year 1488, his duchy of Gandia devolved upon Vanozza's eldest son Giovanni, then a lad of fourteen, who was promptly sent off to Spain to take possession of his inheritance. Cesare, her second son, was intended by his father for an ecclesiastical career. In 1480, when the child was four or five years of age, his father obtained for him from Sixtus IV a dispensation relieving him from the necessity of proving his legitimacy, a relief which was necessary in order to make him eligible for the ecclesiastical benefices which it was the Cardinal's intention to procure for him. Two years later his father was made administrator of all the benefices which should be conferred on the said Cesare Borgia until he reached the age of fourteen. Shortly after that

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Cardinal Rodrigo was able to make his son a canon of Valencia. In 1484, when the boy was eight or nine, he received also the post of treasurer of the cathedral of Cartagena. In 1488 or thereabouts he was sent to the University of Perugia, where, if we may believe the laudations of Paolo Pompilio, the maturity of his intellect and his rapid progress in learning astonished everybody. A few years later he was transferred to the University of Pisa, where he lived in princely style, and amongst other advantages was brought into friendly relations with some of the Medici. The youngest son, Giuffré, was also apparently intended for the Church, although eventually his father made a Neapolitan prince of him instead. When he was about ten years of age we hear of his being made canon and archdeacon of Valencia. Spain was naturally Cardinal Borgia's happy hunting-ground; and in February of this same year 1491 a contract of betrothal was entered into on behalf of his daughter Lucrezia, then barely eleven years of age, and Don Cherubino Juan de Centelles, a youthful brother of the Count of Oliva. Before the year was out, however, some unknown change had taken place in the plans of Lucrezia's father, for the betrothal to Don Cherubino was annulled and another betrothal made instead to Don Gasparo, son of the Count of Aversa, a boy of fifteen then being educated in Valencia. This contract likewise was annulled in its turn; for although the marriage of a Cardinal's bastard into the old and proud nobility of Spain was as brilliant a match

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as even her rich and haughty father could then have aspired to, but a few months later Rodrigo Borgia ascended the Papal throne, and then, of course, he immediately began to cast about for a more splendid as well as a more politically useful alliance.

On July 25, 1492, died Innocent VIII, after an inglorious reign of seven years. There were several candidates for the Papacy, notably Ascanio Sforza, Lorenzo Cibò, Rafael Riario, Rodrigo Borgia and Giuliano della Rovere; but to all intents and purposes the contest lay between Borgia and Rovere. The election of Rovere was ardently desired by Charles VIII of France, who lodged 200,000 ducats in a Roman bank to further his *protégé's* candidature. But Ascanio Sforza, who was bitterly opposed to Giuliano della Rovere, sank his own pretensions and worked hard for the election of Rodrigo Borgia. Both candidates openly and shamelessly promised benefices and money in return for votes; and in this traffic, Borgia, who was by far the richest cardinal in the Church, eventually carried the day. To Cardinal Colonna he promised the rich abbacy of Subiaco, with all its surrounding villages, in perpetuity; to Cardinal Orsini, the two fortified towns of Monticelli and Soriano, together with the Legation of the Marches and the bishopric of Cartagena; to Cardinal Savelli, the town of Civita Castellana and the bishopric of Majorca; to Cardinal Pallavicini, the bishopric of Pamplona; to Cardinal Michiel, the suburban bishopric of Porta, with the tower and

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furniture thereof, including amongst other desirable things a cellar full of good wine ; Cardinals Solafenati, Sanseverino, Riario Rovere and Domenico Rovere each received several valuable benefices ; the Patriarch of Venice, Fra Gheraldo, a man ninety-five years of age, who had but just been made cardinal, was given 5000 golden ducats in cash ; whilst to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza were promised the bishopric of Erlau, which had a revenue of 10,000 ducats, the castle of Nepi, the princely Palazzo Borgia, and the high and lucrative office of Vice-Chancellor. Moreover, shortly before entering the Conclave, Cardinal Borgia sent round to Cardinal Sforza's palace four mules laden with silver plate, ostensibly for safe keeping until the usual pillage was over, but, as was generally believed, with the private understanding that it need not be returned in the event of Borgia's election. Some apologists have recently ventured to deny the simoniacal character of Alexander VI's election ; but the evidence of it is overwhelming.

Late in the night of August 10, or rather in the early hours of the following morning, Rodrigo Borgia heard his election announced. Unable to express his elation, he is reported to have exclaimed jubilantly, " Am I, then, Pope and Vicar of Christ ? " whereupon Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who had been mainly instrumental in securing that result in return for the emoluments already enumerated, expressed his conviction that the election had been the work of God, who had chosen the worthiest of his brethren to fill the chair of St. Peter. The



*Cardinal Ascanio Sforza.*  
*from a medal in the British Museum*





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newly elected Pope replied that he was conscious of his own weakness and unworthiness, but that he hoped for the same divine assistance as had been given to the Apostle, and that he was unfeignedly desirous of following the dictates of the Holy Spirit. Notwithstanding such expressions of humility, however, it was noticed that he made unusual haste to don his pontifical vestments, and that he instructed the Master of the Ceremonies to write his name on small slips of paper and throw these from the window in order that his elevation might be made known as soon as possible to the waiting crowd outside. The mob, of course, first rushed off to pillage the palace of the new Pope, and then swarmed back to St. Peter's to receive his blessing. Many thought that he would take the name of Calixtus, out of compliment to the uncle to whose favour all his wealth and greatness were due. But when this suggestion was made he answered haughtily, "We desire to be known by the name of the invincible Alexander."

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ALTHOUGH the Papal throne had been put up to auction and sold to the highest bidder, the election of Rodrigo Borgia, though not generally expected, seems to have been generally acceptable, both at home and abroad. If Ferrante of Naples really shed the tears which Giucciardini reports, and if the youthful Cardinal de' Medici really whispered to Cardinal Cibò that they were in the jaws of a wolf and would have to flee or be devoured, those two notabilities were either exceptionally sagacious or, as is more probable, exceptionally apprehensive for personal reasons of their own. The new Pope, who was sixty years of age, had as yet shown nothing of those dark traits in his character which were to beget the loathing of his contemporaries and make his name a byword for infamy to succeeding generations. He was generally admitted to be the most capable as well as the most experienced member of the Sacred College. One contemporary describes him as an accomplished man with a thorough knowledge of business; another speaks of his aptitude for finance; yet another of his robust body, vigorous mind, dignified manners, and acquaintance with court ceremonies.

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He is described as tall, powerfully built, with an imposing presence, and dark, lively, penetrating eyes ; as eloquent in speech, fascinating in manner, and endowed with a degree of bodily health capable of enduring endless fatigue ; in fact, as possessing in an eminent degree all the qualities necessary for a distinguished temporal ruler, which seems to have been all that was then looked for in the head of the Church. Most of the Italian States sent dutiful, and apparently genuine, expressions of their loyalty to the Holy Father. Venice, it is true, made no secret of her displeasure ; but on the other hand Florence rejoiced with the ringing of bells, and in Milan the gratification of Ludovico Sforza was shown by public festivities and illuminations. The Romans exhibited every sign of pleasure and approbation. On the night of Alexander's elevation the magistrates of the city rode in procession by torchlight to the Vatican to do him homage ; and a fortnight later the cardinals and nobles, little dreaming how soon so many of them were to fall victims to the rapacity of their new Pontiff, vied with one another in the splendour of their dresses and decorations on the day of his coronation. Triumphal arches and altars and statues and pictures decorated the streets. The most extravagant adulation was expressed by allegorical devices and processions, by addresses and inscriptions, and by ingenious mythological applications of the bull of the Borgian arms. The populace enthusiastically acclaimed the elevation of the most princely of the cardinals, whose

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appearance and demeanour gave promise of a more than ordinarily splendid reign. And the humanistic writers of the time joined in the general chorus of praise and flattery. One of these, after enumerating the seven hundred priests and cardinals with their retinues, the dazzling cavalcades of knights and nobles, the troops of archers and horsemen, the Papal guards with long lances and glittering shields, the twelve riderless horses with golden bridles, and all the rest of the pomp and parade which filled the streets of Rome when Alexander made his ceremonial passage to the Lateran, breaks out into almost lyrical rapture when he comes to describe the Pope himself. The majestic Borgia, we are told, seated upon a milk-white horse, rode along, serene of countenance and of surpassing dignity, bestowing his blessing upon the crowd, and filling every heart with joy. And not only were the mild composure of his mien, the frankness of his glance, the nobleness of his face, regarded as of good augury, but the beauty and vigorous health of his body also, we are assured, enhanced the reverence which he inspired. In similar strain, another contemporary historian, Gasparino of Verona, declares that not only Alexander's broad forehead and majestic countenance, but the heroic beauty of his whole body also was given him by nature in order that he might "adorn the seat of the Apostles with his divine form in place of God." It is highly significant of the morality of the period that no mention was made by anybody of the well-enough-known irregu-

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larities of Rodrigo Borgia's private life ; although, curiously enough, a good deal of indignation soon manifested itself concerning the bribery by means of which he had won his election.

In the early months of his Pontificate, Alexander showed himself a vigorous and capable ruler. There was indeed need of a strong hand ; for during the month which had elapsed between Innocent's death and his successor's coronation no less than 220 assassinations had been perpetrated in the streets of Rome. Besides putting an end to this sort of thing by exemplary severity, the new Pope also recommended himself by more regular payment of official salaries, by moderating the prices of food in the markets, and by various other ordinances making for the quiet and contentment of his people. He had promised to effect reforms in the Curia, to get rid of certain tyrannical officials, to make none but worthy appointments, and to keep his sons far away from Rome ; thus creating a very good impression, and justifying the Ferrarese ambassador's report to his master that Alexander was generally expected to prove "a glorious Pontiff." But all the Pope's good intentions, if good intentions he really did entertain at this time, came to speedy shipwreck through his ardent desire to aggrandise his own kith and kin. On the day of his coronation he conferred on his son Cesare the archbishopric of Valencia, one of the most considerable of the benefices which he had enjoyed during his own cardinalate. A few days later, his nephew Giovanni, son of his sister Juana

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de Lançol, received a cardinal's hat. Shortly afterwards another nephew became the Pope's equerry, while a third was made captain of the palace guard. As early as November the Ferrarese ambassador who three months previously had prognosticated a model Papacy was constrained to write home saying that "ten Papacies would never suffice to satisfy such a swarm of relations." And this was merely a beginning; for in the course of his reign Alexander promoted more than thirty persons bearing his name to spiritual or secular appointments in the service of the Holy See.

Family alliances which had seemed advantageous enough for the children of the Cardinal no longer satisfied the ambition of the Pope, who promptly annulled the contract of marriage between his daughter Lucrezia and Don Gaspar da Procida. While he was casting about for some suitor of higher degree, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, whose influence with a Pope of his own making was naturally very great, brought forward a kinsman of his own in the person of Giovanni Sforza, Lord of Pesaro. Giovanni himself, a young widower, some six-and-twenty years of age, was eager enough for the alliance because, apart from questions of dowry and other advantages, he being an illegitimate son and only recognised as his father's heir by the indulgence of the two previous Popes, it would render his position as a Romagnian despot more secure. Cardinal Ascanio desired it because, great as his influence in the Vatican was at the moment, he had had experience enough to know

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that it might require buttresses in the future, Ludovico Sforza desired it because it was of the greatest importance to him to have the Pope on his side in the struggle for his usurped duchy which he was carrying on with Naples ; and Alexander on his part was equally desirous of a family connection with the powerful ruler of Milan. A betrothal was duly made accordingly ; nobody, of course, thinking it at all necessary to consider the inclinations of the young lady herself.

Shortly before this, Ferrante of Aragon had sent his second son, Federigo, to Rome, to profess his obedience and to persuade the Pope to an alliance with Naples. But although Ferrante's proposals had been warmly supported by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere and several other cardinals, Federigo returned home without any success. The Pope had been aggrieved by Virginio Orsini's purchase of Cervetri and Anguillara from Franceschetto Cibò, with money advanced, as was generally suspected, by King Ferrante ; and when Virginio, who was commander-in-chief of the Neapolitan army, occupied these cities with his troops, Alexander naturally enough became still more uneasy. His anger against Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, who had favoured this arrangement, was so manifest that towards the end of 1492 the Cardinal, feeling himself unsafe in Rome, retired to his impregnable fortress of Ostia. Ferrante was now greatly disturbed at the prospect of a family alliance between the Houses of Borgia and Sforza. He sent Federigo once more to Rome ; and even listened favourably

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to a proposal that he should give his daughter in marriage to the Pope's son Giuffré. But the negotiations came to nothing. The Sforza interest was for the moment all-powerful at the Vatican ; and on April 25, 1493, a league was announced between the Pope, Ludovico Sforza, Venice, Ferrara, and Mantua, one of the first results of which was the despatch of troops by both Milan and Venice to aid the Pope in driving Virginio Orsini out of Cervetri and Anguillara. The King of Naples thereupon complained to the court of Spain that the Pope was stirring up strife in Italy. It was certainly a case of the pot calling the kettle black ; but this cruel and crafty old monarch was a profound student of human nature as well as the most experienced statesman then living ; and even at this early date he had accurately gauged the Pope's character and divined the one object of his policy. Alexander led so scandalous a life, he declared, that every one turned from him with horror. He had seized upon the sale of Cervetri and Anguillara as a pretext to ruin both the Orsini and the Colonna and to begin a quarrel with Naples. He had forced Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere to flee from Rome. He was certainly intriguing with France, and probably even with the Turks. All his thoughts and all his actions were directed to the aggrandisement of his children, which he was determined to accomplish whether by fair means or by foul. As will appear presently, these representations were not without their effect.

Lucrezia, who had but just completed her



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thirteenth year, already had a palace of her own, in close proximity to the Vatican, where, under the guidance of her father's cousin Madonna Adriana, she maintained the state of a royal princess. On June 9, 1493, her betrothed, Giovanni Sforza, arrived in Rome and was received with due ceremony by the Senate, the foreign ambassadors, and other notabilities. Three days later the nuptials were celebrated in the Vatican, with great splendour, in the presence of the Pope, many cardinals and bishops, the ambassadors of France, Milan, Venice and Ferrara, the Roman magistrates, and a brilliant company of fifty noble matrons with their spouses. At the select dinner which followed Alexander VI and several of his cardinals sat down to table with a number of ladies, amongst whom was the beautiful Giulia Farnese-Orsini, concerning whose irregular relations with his Holiness people had already begun to talk, and who is roundly termed by Infessura the Pope's concubine. After the table was cleared many wedding gifts were formally presented to the bride, including diamond and ruby rings, drinking services of silver-gilt, gold brocade, and other articles of considerable value. Then followed the performance of a lively (not to say indecent) comedy, music, singing and dancing, the Pope and his guests spending the whole night in this revelry, "whether well or ill," wrote the Ferrarese ambassador to his master next morning, "I leave your Highness to determine."

Immediately after this the Spanish ambassador

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arrived in Rome, to tender the obedience of his master, but also to warn the Pope that Ferdinand the Catholic looked upon the interests of Naples and the House of Aragon as his own. At the same time Ferrante redoubled his efforts to arrive at an understanding with Alexander and to detach him from the Milan-Venice league before the arrival of the ambassador of France, who, it was presumed, would make tempting offers to secure his master's investiture of the crown of Naples. In conjunction Naples and Spain employed a bait which, according to Ferrante's astute divination, it was not in the nature of Alexander to resist. They proposed that Sancia, natural daughter of Alfonso of Calabria, should be given in marriage to the Pope's youngest son, Giuffré, bringing to him as dowry the principality of Squillace; and that the Pope's eldest son, Giovanni, second Duke of Gandia, should marry the Princess Maria, niece of King Ferdinand, to whom his deceased brother had been betrothed. They also used their good offices to bring about a satisfactory arrangement with Virginio Orsini, whereby Virginio agreed to pay the Pope 35,000 ducats and receive in return the investiture of the fiefs of Cervetri and Anguillara, which he already held by force of arms. A reconciliation was likewise patched up between Alexander and Giuliano de'la Rovere, so that on July 24 both that cardinal and Virginio Orsini came to Rome and dined amicably with the Pope. The engagement of Don Giuffré was to be kept secret until Christmas; but on August 2 the Duke of Gandia set out for

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Barcelona with a splendid retinue, where he was received with princely honours, and duly united to his royal bride. A few days later the French ambassador arrived in Rome to demand the investiture of Naples for his master ; but he was answered in very ambiguous terms ; and some people thought from Alexander's shifting policy that he had lost his head. The Milanese ambassador, however, was of a contrary opinion, having evidently come to the same conclusion as King Ferrante regarding the Pope's real aim. The man, he said, who had negotiated a treaty that made King Ferrante groan and yet brought him to consent to a family alliance, who had married one of his sons to a princess of Spain, who had married his daughter to a prince of the House of Sforza, and who had forced the powerful Virginio Orsini to pay for his fiefs and submit to the Church, was a man who evidently knew what he wanted and also how to accomplish his ends.

In September of this year the Pope created twelve new cardinals. At a later date it was Alexander's policy to fill the Sacred College with Spaniards who were devoted to his interests. In this instance, although he secured for himself a majority which shattered the opposition, the new creations were considerably selected from various nationalities, and most of them were admittedly able and worthy men. Three of the appointments, however, were altogether indefensible. Ippolito d'Este, son of Duke Ercole of Ferrara, was a mere child of fifteen, remarkable at that time only for

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his exceptional personal beauty, but afterwards equally remarkable for his extravagance and dissoluteness. Cesare Borgia received the red hat partly because it was the darling aim of Alexander to advance his children by every means at his disposal, and partly because a son at his right hand in the Sacred College would greatly increase the Pope's power. Alessandro Farnese, a young man of five-and-twenty, cultured and intellectual, but equally dissolute and vicious, owed his elevation solely to the circumstance that his beautiful sister Giulia was Alexander's mistress, a fact so notorious that he came to be dubbed in derision "the petticoat cardinal." Alessandro Farnese undoubtedly showed great ability in after days; but the rise of his family to wealth and greatness and his own elevation to the Pontificate as Paul III in 1534 were due in the first instance to his sister's adulterous connection with Rodrigo Borgia.

Alexander's shifting policy aroused mistrust on all sides. Notwithstanding the apparent triumph of Cardinal Ascanio at the Vatican, his brother Ludovico Sforza thought Milan's alliance with the Pope and Venice so unreliable, and was so disturbed by the Borgia arrangements with Naples lest they should lead to a combined demand on him to give up the reins of government to his nephew Gian Galeazzo, that he sent envoys to Charles VIII urging him to march into Italy, promising him assistance both in men and money, and inflaming the young French king's romantic imagination by representing the conquest of Naples as but a

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preliminary step to the glorious reconquest of Constantinople. On the other hand, Ferrante of Naples was greatly disturbed by the Pope's coquetting with the King of France, and complained that he did nothing to hinder Charles's dangerous designs on Italy. But on January 25, 1494, Ferrante died and was succeeded by his vicious son Alfonso of Calabria. Charles VIII at once sent an embassy to Rome to demand the investiture of the kingdom of Naples; whilst Alfonso on his part hastened to pay off the tribute which his father had shirked, undertook to continue it punctually, and made other offers to induce the Pope to support him and form an alliance against Charles. Alexander played fast and loose as usual. Although in February he wrote expressing his surprise that the French king should entertain designs against another Christian nation instead of uniting against the common foe, in March he sent Charles the Golden Rose, and approved of his action in raising an army, ostensibly for war against the Turk, but really, as the Pope and everybody else knew well enough, for the conquest of Naples. But when Charles's envoy asked for the investiture of that kingdom Alexander refused; and on April 18, having formally decided in favour of the House of Aragon, he appointed his nephew, Cardinal Juan Borgia, as legate to crown Alfonso II at Naples. Alexander's apparently irresolute policy was probably coolly calculated to advance the bargaining which of course went on concerning the advancement of his children. At any rate, it is

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significant that the day before Alfonso was crowned the Pope's eldest son, Giovanni of Gandia, received the principality of Tricarico; his second son, Cardinal Cesare, received a number of valuable benefices in the kingdom of Naples, and his youngest son, Don Giuffré, was married to the king's daughter Sancia, receiving with her the principality of Squillace and an income of 40,000 ducats. In their opposition to these measures of the Pope, Cardinals Ascanio Sforza and Giuliano della Rovere were, for once in their lives, in unison. Cardinal Ascanio wished to leave Rome, but permission was refused. Cardinal Giuliano fled from Ostia, leaving that fortress in the hands of his brother, and, with the aid of Ludovico Sforza, made his way to the camp of Charles VIII at Lyons, where he was warmly received. His urgent entreaties, added to the representations of the *de facto* Duke of Milan, materially hastened the French invasion of Italy.

Charles VIII not only gathered together a great army, but, through his agents, was very active in stirring up strife amongst the Italians. Having secured the active friendship of Milan and the neutrality of Venice, he proceeded to tamper with some of the Roman barons, and by Cardinal Ascanio Sforza's aid the Colonna and others were induced to accept French pay. This, together with the fact that Charles's ecclesiastical allies, especially the cardinals Sforza and Rovere, threatened a Council to depose the Pope on account of his simoniacal election, drove Alexander into a

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tight corner. In this dilemma he turned for aid to the very Turk for whose overthrow by Charles's army he had been apparently so eager a few months previously. When sending to Bajazet in June to ask for the remittance of Djem's allowance, which he said he needed to defend himself against Charles VIII, the Pope instructed his envoy to inform the Sultan that the French king desired to get Djem into his power in order to set him up in Constantinople as soon as Naples had been conquered. Wherefore Bajazet was asked to afford some aid to the Pope and Naples in withstanding Charles, and also to use his good offices to persuade Venice from her present selfish neutrality. When the Pope's envoy, a Genoese named Giorgio Bocciardo, was returning home in November, accompanied by an envoy from Sultan Bajazet bringing answering letters and the 40,000 ducats applied for, they were attacked and robbed both of the papers and the money by the Prefect of Sinigaglia, Giovanni della Rovere. The papers, which, as the Prefect said, contained astounding things most dangerous to Christianity, were sent on to Cardinal Giuliano, and promptly published by Alexander's enemies. In addition to the Pope's instructions to his envoy, in which he promised to remain on terms of strict friendship with the "Infidel" in return for the aids requested, and the Sultan's answer thereto, in which speedy aid was promised to Naples as well as an embassy to Venice—articles in themselves damaging enough—Bajazet had sent another letter to Alexander con-

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taining a proposal which shocked the morals even of that Machiavellian era. He calmly proposed to the Pope that, as the death of Djem in the circumstances would be of benefit to both of them, the Pope should put the prince to death in any manner most convenient to his Holiness, and in return for the dead body Bajazet promised to send Alexander 300,000 ducats in cash, "to purchase some territories for your sons."

Meanwhile Charles had been advancing on his career of conquest with scarcely any hindrance. After crossing the Alps he entered Turin on September 5, and was welcomed as joyfully as though he were a liberator. At Asti, a day or two later, he was greeted by Ludovico Sforza. Here he soon heard of the victory which his cousin, Louis of Orleans, had gained over Ferrantino of Aragon at Rapallo, when with a savagery which struck terror into the Italians, who had been accustomed to the chess-playing and bloodless methods of the condottiere, all the inhabitants, even the sick in the hospital, were put to the sword. On October 14 he entered Pavia in triumph; on the 18th he reached Piacenza. Whilst there he heard of the death of the unfortunate Gian Galeazzo, by which event Ludovico Sforza became undisputedly Duke of Milan. At Pavia Charles had visited the young man who lay there sick to death in the castle, and had turned away from the pleadings of Gian's wife with empty words of consolation. It was now rumoured that Ludovico had poisoned his nephew, but of this there is no sufficient proof. On the



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26th Piero de Medici, frightened out of his wits, arrived at the French camp, and, to the astonishment of Charles and everybody else and the subsequent dismay and anger of his fellow citizens, not only yielded up Florence and all her fortified cities without striking a blow, but undertook to pay 200,000 ducats into the bargain.

The Pope, who watched the French unopposed march with trembling, being without an army, unable to induce Venice to budge from her neutrality, harassed by Caterina Sforza's declaration for France, and by the treacherous handing over of Ostia to the Colonna, now sent Cardinal Piccolomini to negotiate with Charles; but the French king declined to see him, and sent word to say he was coming to Rome to confer with the Pope in person. On November 9 Charles came to Pisa, whose citizens welcomed him enthusiastically, and immediately threw off their allegiance to Florence. On the same day the Florentines expelled the Medici, and proclaimed a republic under the guidance of Savonarola. Eight days later Charles, with lance on thigh, rode at the head of his army into Florence. Imagining himself able to impose what terms he pleased, his demands were extravagant; and when the deputies appointed by the Senate to treat with him objected, he threatened to sound his trumpets. Then Pierro Capponi, one of the burgher deputies, snatched the paper out of the secretary's hands, tore it in pieces in the king's face, and answered boldly, "Sire, if you sound your trumpets we will ring our bells."

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Charles had the sense to know that if driven to desperation the Florentines, who were all armed and who had collected some six thousand soldiers within their walls, having the advantage of all the towers and fortified palaces, might easily get the better even of his formidable army, scattered as it was through the narrow streets. He accordingly gave way, agreed to more equitable terms, made no further efforts on behalf of the recall of the Medici, and on November 28 marched out of the city in the direction of Rome.

Alexander VI was now in a very difficult position. The French king was coming to Rome, it was reported, for the purpose of furthering a reform of the Church. Several cardinals, with Giuliano della Rovere and Ascanio Sforza at their head, were calling for a Council to depose the Pope on account of his simoniacal election, to which of course he well knew they were able to bear witness. He could not break with Alfonso of Aragon without risking the forfeiture of some of the great family advantages which his Neapolitan alliance had gained for him. Envoys passed to and fro between the Pope and the King. Alexander proposed that he should come to meet Charles in order to discuss with him his proposed Crusade; but the King replied that he would rather visit his Holiness in the Vatican. Meantime Alexander fortified and provisioned the castle of St. Angelo, and called in from the Romagna the troops under Virginio Orsini, the Counts of Pitigliano and Trivulzio, and the six thousand Neapolitans under the young Duke of

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Calabria. The sight of this little army seems to have given him a momentary accession of courage, for, although the negotiations with Charles were still going on, and seemed indeed to be on the point of conclusion, he suddenly arrested the Cardinals Ascanio Sforza, Sanseverino and Lunate, who, together with Prospero Colonna and Girolama Estouteville, had come into Rome under his safe conduct to discuss matters. At the same time the French ambassador was informed that his master could not be granted a safe passage through the States of the Church. Nevertheless the French steadily advanced, sacking every place they came to, although meeting with no resistance. On December 10 Charles entered Viterbo, from which the Papal governor had fled. On the 17th he took Civita Vecchia; and on the same day Virginio Orsini went over to the French side and delivered up his strong castle of Bracciano, where Charles set up his headquarters. For weeks the Pope had been irresolute whether to fight or fly. All his valuables had been transferred to St. Angelo, and everything else in the Vatican, down to bed and table services, had been packed for removal. In the end he did neither. The Roman populace called for a treaty with Charles, and declared that if the Pope did not agree to this within two days they themselves would admit the King to the city. On December 24 the Pope, in Consistory, told the young Duke of Calabria that his Neapolitan troops must leave Rome, whereupon Don Ferrantino indignantly quitted the assembly. But even at

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the last moment Alexander was undecided what to do, and on the 25th an agreement was drawn up between him and the Duke whereby it was agreed that he should accompany the Neapolitan troops, taking Prince Djem with him, and that as long as he remained in Naples he should receive 50,000 ducats a year and be accommodated with the fortress of Gaeta for Djem's safe preservation. Before the day was out, however, he had acceded to the French king's demands, released Cardinal Ascanio from prison, and arranged for Charles's entry into Rome.

On December 31, 1494, from three o'clock in the afternoon until nine o'clock at night, the long files of the French army were marching through the gates of the Eternal City amidst shouts of "Francia!" "Colonna!" "Vincoli!" from the excited populace. All the houses displayed French favours; and when darkness came on the streets were lighted with lamps and torches, whose fitful illumination made men and horses loom larger and more formidable than they really were. About seven in the evening the King arrived at the Porta del Popolo, and, having formally received all the keys of the city, rode through the streets with lance in rest to the palace which had been prepared for him. He was a queer figure of a conqueror. Twenty-two years of age, short of stature, with emaciated legs, a malformed disproportionately large head, an immense crooked nose, thick lips always open, and large, lustreless, short-sighted eyes, his hideous personal appearance, which was

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peculiarly repulsive to the beauty-loving Italians, was unrelieved by any intellectual compensations. Guicciardini says that he was not only ignorant of any liberal art, but that he scarcely knew his letters ; that he hated the fatigue of business, and invariably showed want of judgment in any matters that he took in hand ; that though eager to rule, he was utterly incompetent to exercise authority ; and that his desire for glory sprang from empty vanity. That this is not altogether the biased opinion of an Italian enemy is evident from the account of him given by his own follower, De Comines, who describes Charles as weak and wilful, destitute of good sense himself, and surrounded by foolish advisers. Such was the man who now entered into a diplomatic contest with the subtle and wily Rodrigo Borgia. Both parties had fears that their negotiations might be cut short by violent or underhand methods. Alexander entrenched himself in the Borgo, surrounded by his palace guards and a thousand horse. Charles had cannon mounted in front of the palace of San Marco, where he sat down to table alone, with a chamberlain to taste every dish and four physicians to examine every glass of wine that was served to him. Cesare Borgia and all the other cardinals waited upon the King two days after his entry. They were received haughtily, and Charles's first demands were that the castle of St. Angelo should be delivered up to him, that Prince Djem should also be handed over unconditionally, and that Cardinal Cesare should accompany him to Naples

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as hostage for the due observance of any treaty that might be agreed upon.

But Rodrigo Borgia was not the man to deliver himself up bound hand and foot in this fashion, notwithstanding that he was virtually a prisoner in the hands of the most powerful prince in Christendom, whose cannon could shatter the crumbling walls of St. Angelo within a few hours. Cardinals Giuliano della Rovere and Ascanio Sforza, together with Gurk, Sanseverino, St. Denis, Savelli and Colonna, were by the King's side, urging him to call a Council, and having in their hands a decree already drawn up for the deposition of an unworthy Pope who had obtained his elevation by simony. It lay within Charles's power, remarks Gregorovius, to deliver the Church from Alexander VI; and the baneful figure of Cesare Borgia would never have risen to historic importance had this vain and ambitious young king possessed sufficient wisdom and firmness to support those cardinals who were calling for a reform of the Curia. But although he made threat after threat, and thrice pointed his cannon against the castle of St. Angelo, he was completely foiled by the subtle Borgia; and the terms ultimately agreed upon between them freed the Pope from all his fears and spread consternation amongst his enemies. By the treaty which was signed on January 15, 1495, Alexander agreed to give up Civita Vecchia, to appoint governors of Charles's choice in the cities of the Patrimony, to grant complete amnesty to those cardinals and nobles who had espoused the French cause, to

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give the French army free passage through the territories of the Church, to hand over Prince Djem to Charles in order to further his expedition against the Turks (though the Pope was still to retain the Sultan's pension), and to send Cardinal Cesare Borgia with the French army for the next four months, nominally as legate, but really, of course, as hostage. Charles, on his part, promised to recognise Alexander as Pope and to defend him in all his rights. The opposition cardinals were utterly discomfited and dismayed. Lunate and Ascanio Sforza left Rome for Milan at once; Giuliano della Rovere, notwithstanding the Pope's blandishments, refused to trust him, and remained under the protection of the French king.

The day after this treaty was signed Charles accepted Alexander's invitation to take up his quarters in the Vatican. Their first interview was carefully arranged beforehand. Alexander entered the garden by way of the tunnel from St. Angelo; the King, who appeared as though by accident walking in the neighbourhood of the entrance to this passage, advanced towards his Holiness and bent his knee; Alexander, lifting his cap, came forward and raised Charles by the arm, kissed him, and insisted on remaining uncovered until the other had replaced his hat. Charles then requested a cardinalate for his favourite Briçonnet, and as this minister had already been secretly won over to the Pope's side, the request was immediately complied with. Then, taking the King's hand,

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Alexander led him into the palace, where they had no sooner arrived than his Holiness was overcome by a fainting fit which necessitated his being placed in a chair, probably an assumed swoon artfully contrived to enable the Pope to be seated during the interview without raising any disputable point of etiquette. Three days later a Consistory was held, when the French conqueror made public profession of the obedience which he had hitherto refused. Alexander seems to have been rather taken by surprise when the President of the Parliament of Paris explained that it was the custom in France that whenever a vassal made his homage to an over-lord he should receive in return whatsoever favour he requested, wherefore the King of France demanded three things : firstly, confirmation of all the privileges hitherto granted to himself, his wife, and his heir ; secondly, the investiture of the kingdom of Naples to him and his successors for ever ; thirdly, that the security he had given for the return of Prince Djem within six months might be retracted. With his accustomed subtlety the Pope answered that the privileges referred to were willingly confirmed ; but that as the investiture of Naples involved other interests it could not be given until after deliberation and the assent of his cardinals, with whom, however, he promised to use his best endeavours ; whilst as regards Prince Djem he would take a fitter opportunity to talk the matter over with his Majesty and the Sacred College, having little doubt it could be accommodated to their mutual satisfaction. Seemingly



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quite satisfied with this rather evasive reply, Charles kissed the Pope's hand and foot ; and in the prescribed form tendered his obedience and reverence, acknowledging Alexander as Vicar of Christ, and promising to defend both his Holiness and the Church against all enemies. After spending another week in Rome, during which the Pope and the King made a public display of their alliance and friendship by riding out together and by going in state to the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Charles set out for Naples on January 28.

Alfonso II did not await his enemy's arrival. He was reputed to be the first general in Italy ; he was provided with abundant pecuniary resources ; his fortresses were admirably equipped ; and he was at the head of a numerous army. But partisans of Anjou arose on every side, so that in his terror he would start up from sleep imagining the very winds and waves were shrieking " France ! France ! " in his ears. He must have known that, to use Sanudo's words, even Nero would have seemed a saint beside two such accursed despots as himself and his father ; and, overwhelmed by the results of his infamous misgovernment, he formally abdicated on January 23 in favour of his youthful son Ferrantino, taking his treasures with him to Sicily and immuring himself in a cloister at Mazzarra, where, fortunately for the world, he died in the following November. Charles heard of Alfonso's abdication at the end of his first day's march, at Marino. At Velletri, which was his next

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halt, two Spanish ambassadors came to protest against his enterprise ; but Charles, who seemed to be climbing with little trouble to the highest pinnacle of glory, was not to be moved from his purpose. In the morning, however, a disturbing surprise awaited him ; his hostage, Cesare Borgia, had mysteriously disappeared ; and it soon became evident that the young cardinal's escape had been carefully prearranged. As befitted a Pope's son, who was also a legate, Cesare had brought with him a number of baggage waggons, two of which, on being unloaded at the first halt, were seen to be filled with silver plate for the service of his table. But when, on the news of his flight, the French soldiers went to plunder the other waggons, they were found to be filled with stones. It is supposed that Cesare contrived to have the two waggons containing his valuables left behind at Marino, and that during the following night at Velletri, in the disguise of a groom, he had taken horse and hurried back to Rome. Next morning Alexander heard that his son was hiding in the house of the auditor Antonio Flores ; whence he got away in safety first to Rignano and then to Spoleto. The Roman people sent envoys to Charles repudiating any complicity in this breach of faith ; and the Pope also, on the receipt of an angry protest from the King, sent word that he had had no hand in the matter and was ignorant of his son's whereabouts. But he made no offer of another hostage, and Charles could see that he had been tricked. Turning back, however, as the Borgia had calcu-

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lated, was entirely out of the question; and the French army marched on, finding no force to oppose their progress. Trivulzio delivered up Capua; Virginio Orsini and Pitigliano surrendered at Nola; and young Ferrantino, retiring on his capital, found the city in revolt, and was forced to take boat for Ischia. On February 22 Charles rode into Naples in triumph amidst the acclamations of the people. Except for the storming of a couple of fortresses and the slaughter of their garrisons, which had been permitted merely to satisfy the hatred of the Colonna for the Conti, there had been no fighting; the French, as Alexander sarcastically remarked, having overrun Italy in a few weeks with no other arms than a piece of chalk to mark out their quarters.

Three days after his arrival in Naples with Charles, Prince Djem died. Alexander's enemies at once accused him of having poisoned the Turkish prince; and Paolo Giovio relates circumstantially that before being delivered over to the French he had been dosed with a certain white powder mixed in sugar, capable of envenoming any liquor, and inappreciable either by colour or taste. Some modern authorities, including Thousane and Gregorovius, seem inclined to credit the poison theory. But the Pope would lose 40,000 ducats a year by the death of Djem under these circumstances without any prospect of obtaining the larger sum which Bajazet had offered for his dead body; and Alexander VI was by no means the

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man to do this merely to spite Charles VIII. It seems far more probable that the Turk, enfeebled by dissolute habits and by eight years' seclusion in the hot rooms of the Vatican, succumbed to an attack of bronchitis or dysentery, brought on by the hardships of a winter journey as a military prisoner. The death of Djem seems to have put an end to Charles's project of a crusade. After receiving the homage of the Neapolitan nobility and people, he demanded the investiture of the kingdom from the Pope; and whilst Alexander hesitated or temporised he abandoned himself to his customary dissipation. But all the powers of Europe were now thoroughly alarmed, and there were signs of a gathering storm. Spain, having already made formal protest against the French aggression, sent her great captain, Gonsalvo de Cordova, to Sicily with a body of troops. The Emperor Maximilian was disturbed at the prospect of Charles obtaining the hegemony of Europe. Venice now realised that there was real danger to herself. The Pope feared a Council from France triumphant. And Ludovico Sforza, who had invited Charles into Italy to bring about disturbance rather than conquest, so that in the confusion he might more firmly establish himself, was now greatly disquieted by the claims of Orleans on the duchy of Milan. These powers therefore formed a league on March 31, ostensibly for defence against the Turk, but really for united action against the French conqueror; and Charles, who knew well enough what the combination

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meant, saw that nothing remained for him but a safe retreat.

Had the various Italian States united to oppose the French invasion, which might well have happened had Lorenzo de' Medici been still alive, Charles would never have reached Naples; had they now carried out the purpose of their league with vigour and resolution, his retreat would have become a hopeless rout. And he gave them every opportunity; for it was not until May 12 that, finding it impossible to extort his investiture from the Pope, he asserted his unsupported claims to the kingdom of Naples and the Empire of the East in the Neapolitan cathedral; and not until the 20th of that month that, leaving Montpensier with half his army to hold the conquered kingdom, he set out with the remaining half on his way back to France. The Pope had received troops from no member of the league except Venice, and, doubtful of his ability to defend himself against even half of the French army, he retired, with twenty of his cardinals and 10,000 troops, to Orvieto. On June 1 Charles VIII re-entered Rome, where he was received with all due honour, according to the Pope's instructions. On this occasion he enforced strict discipline amongst his troops and made offers of a tribute if the Pope would grant him the investiture of Naples. But Alexander kept out of the way, and Charles was forced to resume his retreat. At Siena on the 13th Savonarola came to meet him and warned him that he had incurred the wrath of God by neglecting to reform the

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Church. At Pisa he was implored by the inhabitants not to deliver them over again to Florence. He turned a deaf ear to both, and continued his march. Had the allies thrown themselves upon him he must have been annihilated ; but he was allowed to cross the Apennines with all his baggage and artillery, and it was not until he reached the river Taro, near Fornuovo, that the forces of the league under Francesco Gonzaga barred his way and gave him battle on July 6. Both sides claimed the victory ; but although Charles lost all the immense booty which he had plundered from Naples and other towns of Italy, his loss of men was far less than that of his opponents, and he was able to reach Asti in safety. After giving his soldiers a much-needed rest, he established himself in Turin. His cousin, the Duke of Orleans, was now besieged by the allied forces in Novara ; and Charles set about endeavouring to detach Milan from the league. Meanwhile the Pope, his personal danger having passed, had returned to Rome, whence at the instigation of Venice he commanded Charles to withdraw all his troops from Italy on pain of excommunication. About the same time young Ferrantino of Aragon, having received aid from the Pope and Venice and Spain, drove Montpensier out of Naples and recovered his kingdom. Once more the successes of his allies threatened to become inconvenient to Ludovico Sforza ; and consequently, without their knowledge, he made a separate treaty with Charles, which gave him back Novara, left him in undis-

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turbed possession of his duchy, and allowed the French king to return to his own dominions, despoiled of his plunder, and followed by the diseased and dirty remnant of his once magnificent army.

## IV

### DIVORCE AND MURDER

THE disappearance of the French menace left Alexander VI free once more to pursue his darling project of advancing the worldly fortunes of his children. The crimes with which the Borgia have been charged have sometimes led to the impression that they were savage, sombre, and ferocious monsters. Superficially, at any rate, they presented a very different appearance to their contemporaries. Vicious they undoubtedly were, even according to the lax moral standard of their day. But at the same time they were as graceful and attractive and charming a set of people as could be found in any of the courts of Italy. Alexander VI was noted for the dignity of his manners, the eloquence of his speech, the charm of his address, and for a geniality and gaiety that never failed him. In these respects most of his family seem to have been no less happily endowed. They were all bright, lively, pleasure-loving young people, rather barbaric in their love of magnificence and display, but fairly versed in the culture of their time, and fond of the society of artists and men of letters. Before the French invasion came about they had all been already abundantly provided

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for. Vanozza's eldest son, Giovanni, had succeeded Don Pedro Luis in the dukedom of Gandia. Part of the Pope's bargain with Alfonso II in return for the investiture of Naples had been the conferring on Giovanni of the Principality of Tricarico and the Countships of Claromonte, Lauria, and Carinola. It was Alexander's desire to make this favourite son of his a great prince; and he proposed now to endow him with the extensive possessions of the Orsini. The moment was a favourable one, for Virginio Orsini and his son, Giovanni Giordano, had been forced to capitulate with the French garrison at Atila, and were being kept in prison by Ferrantino of Naples at the Pope's request, so that the Orsini family were deprived of their ablest generals. The Duke of Gandia was summoned from Spain to Rome, where he arrived on August 10, 1496, and was soon afterwards made standard-bearer of the Church, Governor of Viterbo, and Legate of the whole Patrimony, Giulia's brother, Cardinal Farnese, being removed from the last-named post in order to make room for him. Then, having secured the services of Guidobaldo of Urbino to lead the Papal forces, Alexander, who had an exaggerated opinion of the military talents of his son, appointed Giovanni second in command. The expedition set out in October; and at first did very well. The strongholds of Scrofano, Galera, Formello, and Campagnano were easily taken one after another, and Anguillara gave itself up without any resistance. Then siege was laid to Trevignano and the impregnable five-

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towered castle of Bracciano, when, unfortunately for the Papal forces, the Duke of Urbino was wounded and the command devolved upon the Duke of Gandia. Towards the end of November Trevignano surrendered; but Bracciano held out until it was relieved by a force under Vitellozzo Vitelli of Città di Castello, which on January 25, 1497, totally routed the Papal forces, wounded the Duke of Gandia, and took the Duke of Urbino prisoner. Alexander was compelled to make peace at once; and was nearly beside himself at this failure of his first attempt to crush one of the great and turbulent Roman baronial houses and transfer their possessions to his own family. Although the Orsini agreed to pay him 50,000 golden florins, and submitted to his retaining possession of Cervetri and Anguillara, he was forced to restore all their other castles, so that they remained masters of the Campagna; whilst the French still held Ostia and seriously interfered with the import of provisions into Rome. In this difficulty Alexander invoked the aid of Spain, and Gonsalvo of Cardova coming to his assistance with 1000 foot and 600 horse forced Ostia to capitulate within a fortnight. On March 15 Gonsalvo and the Duke of Gandia, "the one an able statesman and general, the other a mere stage prince bedizened with ornaments and tinsel," returned in triumph to Rome.

In the previous February the Pope had strengthened his influence in the Sacred College by adding four more Spanish cardinals to the five

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who were already there, one of the new creations being his sister's son, Juan Borgia. He now felt strong enough to deprive Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere of all his benefices, and to remove that cardinal's brother, Giovanni, from the Prefecture of Rome. Then, having failed to enrich his son, Giovanni, by spoiling the Orsini, Alexander proceeded to endow him with a principality at the expense of the Church. On June 7, in a secret consistory, the duchy of Benevento and the cities of Terracina and Pontecorvo were handed over to the Duke of Gandia as hereditary possessions; only one out of twenty-seven cardinals venturing to utter the slightest protest.

Vanozza's second son, Cesare, although nominated to an archbishopric on the day of his father's coronation, had not been allowed to enter Rome until two months afterwards. He disliked the idea of an ecclesiastical career; and as early as March 1493 there had been talk of his relinquishing the priesthood and marrying one of the natural daughters of the King of Naples. The Ferrarese ambassador, Boccaccio, who was on intimate terms with the young man, mentions having met him one day about that time just as he was going out hunting, dressed, not as an ecclesiastic, but in silk, and armed, like a layman. His bearing, we learn, was princely, and he was endowed with great talents and a very charming personality. Like his father and his sister, he was remarkable for high spirits, a smiling countenance, and a ready laugh. His appearance, we are told, was more distinguished

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than that of his elder brother the Duke of Gandia, although the latter also was highly endowed. He never had any inclination for the priesthood, adds Boccaccio, and if the projected marriage takes place, his benefices, which are worth 16,000 ducats annually, will fall to his younger brother, Giuffré. This projected marriage never came to anything; and six months later, on September 20, 1493, Cesare was created Cardinal-Deacon of Santa Maria Nuova at the age of eighteen. He had given the first proof of that subtlety and daring and unscrupulousness for which he afterwards became so famous by escaping from Charles VIII's army at Velletri in January 1495; and at the date we have now reached, though only twenty-two years of age, was a personage of great wealth and immense influence in Rome.

Vanozza's third son, Giuffré, now sixteen years of age, had been married three years previously to Donna Sancia of Aragon, and had thereby become Prince of Squillace in the kingdom of Naples. He and his wife did not appear in Rome until May 1496, when they entered the Eternal City in royal state, being met by Lucrezia and her suite as well as by ambassadors, cardinals, and nobles, who escorted them to the Vatican. Donna Sancia, a beautiful but giddy girl, who had been brought up in one vicious court and was now transferred to another equally vicious, and in which, as the wife of a boy husband, she was allowed greater freedom, soon got herself scandalously talked about. Not only were several young cardinals and

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Roman nobles believed to enjoy her favours, but it was also whispered that her two brothers-in-law, the Duke of Gandia, and Cardinal Cesare, were favoured by her in turn, and that they quarrelled for the exclusive possession of her.

Lucrezia, as we have already seen, had been married to Giovanni Sforza, Lord of Pesaro, in June 1493. After her marriage, as before, she lived and held her court in the palace of S. Maria in Portico, with Madonna Adriana Mila-Orsini in attendance upon her. Vanozza remained in her own house in the Regolo quarter, evidently keeping up constant intercourse with her illustrious children, although there is no record of her ever having set foot in the Vatican. Giovanni Sforza, like most of his family, was a handsome man of noble bearing and princely demeanour. A medal struck some ten years after his marriage to Lucrezia shows him as possessing a high forehead, an aquiline nose, a sensitive mouth, long flowing locks, and a full beard. There is no evidence that he was not quite as attractive to Lucrezia, as that charming, delicate-featured, blue-eyed, golden-haired, slender, but beautifully proportioned, and always gay and smiling young girl presumably was to him. Soon after his marriage we hear of him riding out with his brother-in-law, the Duke of Gandia, both richly dressed in garments glittering with jewels, as though they were two kings; and everybody thought, as the Ferrarese ambassador prognosticated, that "so long as this Pope rules, the illustrious Lord Giovanni will be a great man

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in Rome." But his uncles, Cardinal Ascanio and Duke Ludovico Sforza, had married him to Lucrezia for the express purpose of engaging the Pope on the side of Milan against Naples; consequently when Alexander shifted his ground and granted the investiture of that kingdom to Alfonso II, whilst Charles VIII on Ludovico Sforza's invitation was preparing his expedition for its conquest, the Pope's son-in-law found his position at the Vatican somewhat awkward, In April 1494 he wrote to his uncle Ludovico begging for his support, and plainly hinting that he feared being deprived of his principality. Early in June he betook himself to his own city, taking his bride with him according to nuptial contract; Lucrezia being accompanied by her mother, together with the Pope's confidential cousin, Madonna Adriana, and his beloved mistress, Giulia Farnese. Lucrezia and her husband were to remain at Pesaro for a year. It was proposed that the others should remain with her until August; but from a letter of the Pope to his daughter dated July 24th it appears that Adriana and the precious Giulia had then left Pesaro in order to look after the latter's brother, who was sick of fever at Capodimonte. The letter exhibits the Holy Father's anxiety for the safety of his concubine; and that anxiety was not unwarranted, for on November 27 following, whilst Charles VIII was in Florence, a troop of French cavalry who had been scouring the Patrimony captured the ladies Adriana and Giulia, with their suite, as they were travelling

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from Capodimonte to Viterbo. The French captain, when he discovered who his beautiful captives were, demanded 3000 ducats as ransom, for which sum Giulia at once wrote to Rome. The Pope was frantic. He sent one messenger to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who was with the Colonna, and another to Cardinal Sanseverino, who was with the French king, imploring their assistance to obtain the release of the fair prisoners. Charles seemed quite indifferent, declined to see the ladies, and allowed them to be escorted to the gates of Rome on December 1 by an escort of 400 cavalry. We learn from a letter of the Ferrarese ambassador at Milan that his Holiness rode out to meet the ladies arrayed in a black doublet bordered with gold brocade, wearing Spanish boots, a beautiful belt in the Spanish fashion with sword and dagger, and a velvet biretta, "all very gallant." And the same ambassador reports that the shrewd Ludovico Sforza gravely reproved his brother Ascanio and Cardinal Sanseverino for surrendering such precious hostages for the paltry sum of 3000 ducats. The Pope, he said, would have paid fifty thousand, or more, to get them back again; but seeing they were his heart and eyes, and that he could not do without them, the best plan would have been to hold them back, and thereby get a whip in hand to compel him to do whatever they wanted.

The whole of Italy seems to have been aware of the relationship which existed between this astonishing sexagenarian Pope and the young

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Giulia Farnese. In 1492 she had given birth to a daughter, who was named Laura, and officially styled the daughter of Orsini, though everybody felt assured that she was really the child of the Pope. Giulia's husband was agreeable (or perhaps compelled) to keep himself out of the way on one of the estates which had been presented to him on his marriage; and the satirists of the day blasphemously called Madonna Giulia "Christ's bride." Whether this beautiful but frivolous and shameless girl were attracted by the magnetic personality of the man Rodrigo Borgia, whether she were fascinated by the homage of the Holy Father before whom even princes prostrated themselves, or whether she were a callous and calculating adventuress who reckoned upon providing for herself and her relations out of her lover's abundant bounty, is altogether a matter of conjecture. At any rate, she made little secret of it, living in the palace of S. Maria in Portico as lady-in-waiting on her lover's daughter, Lucrezia, and being ready enough to inform obsequious courtiers that this, that, or the other benefice had not been obtained by the recommendations of the Vice-Chancellor or any other dignitary, but solely through her own influence with the Pope. Lorenzo Pucci, writing to his brother in Florence in December 1493, speaks of Laura as "the child of the Pope, the niece of the Cardinal [*i.e.* Giulia's brother Alessandro], and the putative daughter of Signor Orsini"; and relates how he had boldly so designated her in



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course of a recent conversation with the cardinal in question. In the same letter he goes on to give some interesting details of a visit he had paid to Madonna Giulia at the palace of S. Maria in Portico. He found her sitting by the fire with Madonna Lucrezia, having just finished washing her hair. She received him very cordially, and showed him her baby, in whose face he declared he saw a strong family likeness to the Pope, although presumably he kept his thoughts on this point to himself at the moment. Giulia, he says, has grown stouter, and is a most beautiful creature. She let down her hair and had it dressed before him, sending him into raptures of admiration; for never had he seen anything to compare with it: it reached to her feet, and shone like the sun! Some notion of Giulia's style of beauty may be obtained from a fresco of the Virgin and Child by Pinturricchio over the door of one of the rooms in the Vatican, as the features of the Virgin in this picture are traditionally believed to have been copied from those of Giulia Farnese.

Few details have reached us concerning the private life of Lucrezia Borgia in Rome, for she is hardly ever alluded to in the despatches of the foreign ambassadors, who were far from being the scandal-mongers which the Borgian apologists would like to make them out, but, on the contrary, seldom reported to their masters at home anything which had no bearing on political affairs. Burchard rarely mentions her in his diary, and when he does it is always in connection with some of the affairs

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of the Vatican. She and her sister-in-law, Donna Sancia, who was only about a year older than herself, seem to have held a splendid court in the Vatican and in their own palaces. Music, dancing, masquerades, and revels of all kinds were the order of the day. Alexander VI was fond of having comedies and ballets performed at all the family festivities in the Vatican; and these representations were of a character that would now be prohibited by the censor in any European country. This, however, did not shock the morals or taste of the men and women of the Renaissance; but old-fashioned Catholics were greatly scandalised to hear that the Pope and his cardinals freely took part in all the festivities in indiscriminate association with females. We may take it for granted that Lucrezia and Donna Sancia and Giulia Farnese entertained and were entertained by cultured and gallant young ecclesiastics, such as the Cardinals Medici, d'Este, Riario, and Farnese. They were also doubtless frequent guests at the banquets of the various Roman nobles, as well as in the no less splendid palaces of some of the wealthy bankers and merchants of the time. They must often have aroused the envy as well as the admiration of the citizens of the Eternal City when they were seen riding through the streets to or from one of these palaces and the Vatican, or when they rode out to the Campagna, hunting or hawking, in company with their gay and princely husbands, all gorgeously attired, and surrounded by a brilliant cavalcade of equally resplendent

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courtiers. But coming troubles had already begun to cast their shadows before.

The Pope had decided to dissolve Lucrezia's marriage with Giovanni Sforza. That alliance had now become rather an incumbrance than otherwise; and Alexander, prompted perhaps by his young but abnormally astute son Cesare, desired Lucrezia's freedom in order that she might enter into another marriage more favourable to the Borgia plans for family advancement. But Giovanni, who did not yet realise what kind of persons it was with whom he had to deal, refused to agree to an amicable divorce. Whether or not Lucrezia wished for the divorce does not appear; but at any rate she enabled her husband to escape from the vengeance of her father and brother. According to the chroniclers Almerici and Marzetti of Pesaro, when Cardinal Cesare came to visit Lucrezia one evening in Holy Week she commanded her husband's chamberlain, Jacomino, to conceal himself behind a screen in the room. The Cardinal talked very plainly to his sister, and amongst other things informed her that the order had already been given to kill her husband. As soon as he had departed Lucrezia directed Jacomino to tell his master what he had heard. Sforza immediately made some excuse for visiting the Church of St. Onofrio, mounted a horse that had been sent there to await him, and galloped off to his own territory at such a rate that when he reached Pesaro after four-and-twenty hours' riding the exhausted animal dropped dead. Safe

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in his own domain, where he was protected by the power of Venice, Giovanni continued for some months to resist the Pope's demand that he should voluntarily relinquish Lucrezia ; and in the meantime everybody's thoughts were turned in another direction by a terrible and mysterious tragedy in the family of the Borgia.

A day or two after the Duke of Gandia had been invested with the duchy of Benevento, the Pope appointed Cardinal Cesare as Legate for Naples. It was arranged that he should proceed thither early in the following month for the purpose of crowning the new king, Ferrantino, and that he should be accompanied by his brother Gandia. On June 14 Vanozza entertained her three sons together with Cardinal Juan Borgia and a number of other friends at a supper at her vineyard in the neighbourhood of S. Pietro in Vincoli. It was late in the evening when the Duke of Gandia and Cardinal Cesare mounted their horses as though to return together to the Vatican. But when near the palace of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza the Duke took leave of his brother, saying that he had to attend to some private business, and rode away into the darkness, accompanied only by one groom, and by an unknown man in a mask, who had come to him at the feast and who had been in the habit of visiting him at the Vatican during the past month. He was never seen alive again. When morning came, and the Duke did not return, his servants sent word to the Pope, who, though somewhat disturbed, was well enough acquainted with his

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son's habits to assume that he was engaged in some love affair and could not leave the house in daylight for fear of compromising himself or the lady. But when night came and nothing could be heard of Giovanni, Alexander was terrified, and commanded every effort to be made to discover his whereabouts. Presently the police brought intelligence that they had found the missing Duke's groom lying mortally wounded in the Piazza degli Ebrei, and too far gone to give any intelligence about what had happened to his master. Then the rumour spread throughout Rome that the Duke had been murdered and his body thrown into the Tiber. Inquiries were made of all who had business on the river or who lived near it; and at length, on the 16th, a Selavonian charcoal dealer or timber merchant told of a strange scene of which he had been eye-witness on the night of the 14th. Whilst keeping watch over a load of timber which he had put on shore, he noticed two men emerge from the alley on the left-hand side of the Selavonian Hospital, who looked all round to see if the coast were clear, and then went back. Presently two other men appeared, and after looking about in the same manner, made a signal. Then there emerged a man on a white horse, carrying behind him on the crupper a dead body, the head and hands of which were supported on the one side and the legs on the other by the two men whom he had seen at first. Coming slowly to the place where rubbish was usually shot, the horseman backed towards the river, and his

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attendants lifted the dead body and flung it as far as they could into the water. "Have you thrown him well in?" inquired the cavalier; and they replied, "Yes, sir." After this he turned his horse's head to the river, and seeing something black floating asked what it was. They replied that it was his cloak, and then threw stones upon it till it sank. Finally they all disappeared down the alley which led to the Hospital of St. James. Of course the man was asked why he had not instantly reported such an occurrence to the Governor; and his reply is illuminating as to the law and order maintained under the rule of Pope Alexander VI. "In my time," said he, "I have seen a hundred dead bodies flung into the Tiber, and never heard of anybody troubling himself about them."

The inhabitants of Rome, from the highest to the lowest, were greatly agitated and alarmed. The Orsini and the Colonna called their troops together; citizens closed their shops and barricaded their doors; for nobody knew what might happen next. Meanwhile hundreds of fishermen were set to work with their nets dragging the river, and about mid-day the body of the Duke was found, near to S. Maria del Popolo and close to a garden belonging to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza. The hands were tied together, the throat had been cut, and the body was pierced by nine ghastly wounds. But it was evidently no case of robbery, for not only were the rich and costly garments intact, but a purse containing forty ducats was found

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upon the corpse. After being taken to the Castle of St. Angelo, and washed and clothed in the robes of the Gonfaloniere of the Church, the body of the murdered man, on an open bier, was carried to S. Maria del Popolo to be buried with all due pomp and ceremony in the family chapel of his mother. The Pope became nearly frantic. Burchard records that he shut himself up in his room, refusing to eat or drink, weeping and moaning bitterly, and unable to obtain a moment's sleep from Thursday until Sunday. At length, in response to the urgent and persistent entreaties of the Cardinal of Segovia and other courtiers, he opened his door. He had already given orders to the Governor of the city to make a thorough search of every house on the banks of the Tiber, including the palace of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza; but the complete failure of the police to find the slightest clue left room for all sorts of suspicions and rumours. Some suspected it to be a retaliation on the part of the Orsini; some that it was the work of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who was known to have had a violent quarrel with the Duke a short time previously; others attributed it to Giovanni Sforza, actuated, it was whispered, not merely by desire for vengeance on the Pope but also by jealousy of Gandia's reputed incestuous relations with Lucrezia. But, in addition to these, suspicion also rested on the Duke of Urbino, Cardinal Sanseverino, and Count Antonio Maria della Mirandola, who had a beautiful daughter, and whose palace stood near the spot where the Duke

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was thrown into the river ; whilst many believed the deed to be the work of some unknown jealous husband.

On June 19 the Pope summoned a Consistory, which was attended by all the cardinals except Ascanio Sforza, and by the ambassadors of Spain, Venice, Naples, and Milan. After they had all offered their condolences, he addressed them in a speech in which he declared that he loved the Duke of Gandia better than any one else in the world, that if he had seven Papacies he would give them all for the life of his son, that he knew not who was the murderer, but that he repudiated the suspicions which had been cast upon his son Giuffré, his son-in-law Giovanni Sforza, the Duke of Urbino, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, and others—though it was remarked as significant that as regards the Orsini he merely maintained silence. He regarded the Duke's death as a punishment for his sins ; and had resolved to amend his own life and to reform the Church. He renounced all nepotism from henceforth, promised that benefices should be conferred on none but proper and deserving persons, and appointed on the spot a commission of cardinals to carry out the necessary reforms. "Time will show whether he is in earnest," wrote Cardinal Ascanio to his brother, Ludovico, in Milan ; and it was not long before time did show, for as soon as the Commission produced its first projects of reform Alexander vetoed them on the ground that they unduly restricted the liberty of the Pope. From a letter



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of the Florentine ambassador, Bracci, we learn that four days after this Consistory Alexander suddenly abandoned the search for his son's murderer, probably, as this envoy surmises, in order to put the criminals off their guard ; but in a subsequent despatch some weeks later, Bracci reports that the reason why the Pope has abandoned his investigations is that *he knows all*.

The assassination had evidently been carefully planned some time beforehand ; and Bracci rightly describes it as a masterpiece of craft. Popular suspicion fastened itself in turn upon everybody who could be surmised to have any motive for the deed ; but it was not until some nine months after that anybody accused the dead Duke's brother Cesare. From that date until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when William Roscoe ventured to express a contrary opinion in his "Life and Pontificate of Leo X," the young cardinal was universally believed to have been his brother's murderer. Roscoe's disbelief seems to have been founded solely on the ground that after the event Cesare appeared to have enjoyed the continued favour both of his father and of his mother. But some subsequent historians have given other reasons for doubting or disbelieving the traditional story. Mandell Creighton, in his "History of the Papacy," contends that the accusation against Cesare rests on no better foundation than the suspicions against Cardinal Ascanio, Giovanni Sforza, the Orsini, and the rest of them. He inclines to think the Duke probably fell a

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victim to the jealousy of some lover or husband whose honour had been attacked ; but finally concludes that it is impossible to express any certain opinion. Pastor, in his "History of the Popes," while admitting that the amatory explanation may after all be the true one, alleges Alexander's persistent pursuit of the Orsini as evidence that the Pope believed them to be the murderers of his son. He sees no evidence to implicate Cesare ; and indorses Knöpfier's remark that, considering the intense hatred which Cesare afterwards inspired, we cannot wonder if one undeserved accusation should be added to the many which he so richly merited, nor that it should have been generally believed.

On the other hand, Gregorovius, in his "History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages," brings in an unhesitating verdict of guilty. Guicciardini, Machiavelli, and all the principal statesmen and historians of the time, believed Cesare to be the murderer ; and although no one dared for a time to express the opinion openly, he finds indications that from the first it was generally held in secret. Moreover, he holds that the Pope knew, but that Alexander had already fallen so completely under the spell of Cesare's terrible strength of will that he trembled and bowed down before it. Of course it would be absurd to look for such proof of this far-off crime as would suffice to hang a man at the Old Bailey in the present day. But there are at least two points in the case which seem totally inexplicable on any other hypothesis than Cesare's

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fratricide and the Pope's knowledge of it. Although burning for vengeance, and having given orders for the pursuit of the assassins with the utmost rigour, Alexander suddenly abandoned all search for them nine days after the event. What other explanation can be given of this inconsistency except Bracci's that it was because the Pope knew who was the criminal? And if he knew that it was a Sforza or a Mirandola, an Urbino or an Orsini, is it conceivable that such a man as Rodrigo Borgia would have rested for a moment until he had destroyed the murderer of his favourite son? The second point is scarcely less significant. Cardinal Cesare's name never appears in any of the proceedings at the Vatican, public or private, from the day of the murder until July 22, when he left Rome, according to arrangement, for the purpose of crowning Ferrantino of Aragon at Naples. He exhibited no sign of that fierce vindictiveness which flashed out so terribly on other occasions; neither, on the other hand, did he show any sign of a softer spirit; and he did not attend his brother's funeral. During those thirty-seven days he and the Pope seem to have avoided one another; and it is further noticeable that when he returned from Naples on September 6, after having fulfilled his mission with great splendour and éclat, the Pope received him in Consistory with strange and unaccustomed reserve, for Burchard notes in his diary that the father and son did not exchange a single word.

Not even the most thorough-going admirers of

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Cesare Borgia—and, strange to say, several of them have recently appeared—have ventured to suggest that he was incapable of fratricide ; but they, as well as Pastor and some other historians, have argued in favour of his innocence in this case that, as the Duke of Gandia's son would inherit his father's title and possessions, there was no "sufficient motive" impelling his brother to the murder. It would be too strange a question of casuistry to determine what might be considered a "sufficient motive" for fratricide ; but looking at the matter in the light of Cesare's subsequent conduct and career it is easy enough to show that, at any rate, he must have been strongly desirous of having the Duke of Gandia out of his way. Cesare had already determined to lay aside his clerical habit and carve out a career for himself by arms and diplomacy. But his elder brother Giovanni was his father's favourite ; and the Pope, who had an exaggeratedly high opinion of the Duke's military talents, intended to advance him to the highest attainable pitch of secular greatness. Whilst Cesare could never hope to occupy the Papal chair on account of the stain of his bastardy, the Dukedom of Benevento, backed by all the wealth and power of the Holy See, might easily prove to be only a stepping-stone to the throne of Naples. After carefully watching the conduct of the campaign against the Orsini, Cesare can have felt nothing but contempt for the military abilities of his brother ; and yet it was perfectly plain to him that so long as this incom-

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petent favourite of the Pope lived, his own path along these lines was insurmountably barred. We need not go so far as Charles Yriarte and Louis Gastine, who contend that Cesare had already become convinced that the safety of the Papacy, and consequently of the House of Borgia, depended upon the instant establishment of the temporal power of the Church. And their citation of the decorative chasings on his sword of state in glorification of the deeds of his great Roman namesake as "documentary evidence" of his own settled determination to extend the empire of the Holy See over the whole of Italy, may certainly be dismissed as fanciful and fantastic. But although Cesare was only twenty-two years of age, his mind was far in advance of his years, his personal ambition was boundless, his tiger-like spirit had already shown itself in the orders given for the murder of his brother-in-law Giovanni Sforza, and what we know of his subsequent swift and sanguinary dealings with Perotto, with the Duke of Bisceglia, and with his own condottiere generals at Sinigaglia, forbids us to suppose that he would have had any qualms about clearing from his path by a violent death even a brother who barred his way to "honour and glory."

Alexander's buoyancy of nature did not allow of any prolonged indulgence in grief even for the death of his favourite son. All idea of reform, either of the Church or of his private life, was soon abandoned; his old habits of licentious living were resumed; his nepotism became more

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pronounced than ever ; and from this time forward he seems to have fallen more and more under the influence, it might indeed be said under the complete control, of his son Cesare. The Pope was determined to have Lucrezia divorced from Giovanni Sforza, but the Lord of Pesaro still refused to submit even after a commission presided over by two cardinals had declared the marriage to be null and void on the ground that it had never been consummated because of his impotency. Giovanni went to Milan to solicit the support of his powerful relative the Duke ; but Ludovico Sforza, after making the humorous suggestion that Giovanni should submit himself to a test of his capacity in the presence of trustworthy witnesses, finally joined with Cardinal Ascanio in inducing their kinsman to submit to the inevitable. Sforza accordingly declared in writing that his marriage with Lucrezia had never been consummated, whereupon on December 20, 1497, the divorce was formally decreed, and Giovanni required to return his wife's dowry of 31,000 ducats. But he took a terrible revenge ; for to his exasperation is due the foulest of all the scandals which have besmirched the name of Borgia. He told his uncle Ludovico in so many words that the reason why the Pope wished to divorce him from Lucrezia was the Holy Father's desire to have unfettered unnatural relations with his own daughter.

Unfortunately Alexander's conduct had been so unexampled and outrageous that people were ready to believe anything of him ; and the matter

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became common talk throughout Italy. When Guicciardini wrote his history forty years afterwards he stated it as an accepted fact that Lucrezia's two brothers, Giovanni and Cesare, were rivals in the love of their common sister; and added that it was commonly reported, "if we ought to believe so great an enormity," that not only the two brothers, but the Holy Father himself was a candidate for her favours. Early in June, before the murder of her brother Giovanni, Lucrezia had left her palace in Rome and retired to the Convent of S. Sisto on the Appian Way. Donato Aretino, reporting this event, which naturally caused some speculation in Rome, remarks that some people say she will turn nun, whilst others make statements which he would rather not trust to a letter. Villari, in his "Life and Times of Machiavelli," seems to suspect not only some connection between this dark hint and a subsequent report by some of the foreign ambassadors in Rome that in March 1498 Lucrezia gave birth to an illegitimate child, but also between these two reports and the parentage of a certain Giovanni Borgia, the mysterious "Infans Romanus," who must have been born somewhere about that time. By a Brief dated September 1, 1501, the Pope legitimised this boy as the natural son of Cardinal Cesare and a Roman spinster; but in a second Brief, issued immediately afterwards, the boy, who is stated to be about three years old, is acknowledged as the Pope's own son. At a later date this boy Giovanni appeared at

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Lucrezia's court at Ferrara, and he was brought up and educated with her own son Rodrigo.

Amongst those who had written to express their sympathy with the Pope on the occasion of the murder of his son we find the name of Girolamo Savonarola. But the great Florentine preacher and religious reformer did not by any means abate in his denunciations of the corruption of the Church in general or of the notorious evil living of the Pope in particular. At first Alexander seems to have been only scornfully amused at the infatuation of the Florentines for a "chattering friar"; but after the death of Lorenzo de' Medici Savonarola's influence reached such a height that it had to be seriously reckoned with. Like the old Hebrew prophets, he claimed to be divinely inspired; and when his prediction that a new Cyrus would overrun Italy without opposition seemed to be miraculously fulfilled to the very letter by the expedition of Charles VIII, many believed that the fanatical Dominican was indeed a man sent from God. Even Charles himself seems to have been touched with the prevalent superstition, for when Savonarola boldly threatened him with the Divine wrath if he did not promptly evacuate Florence, the French conqueror humbled himself and departed. In July 1495 Alexander had courteously invited him to Rome to explain his claims to a Divine commission; but the "chattering friar," who was not so simple as to put his head into the wolf's jaws, excused himself. Then, in September, the Pope suspended him;

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but the call of the Florentines was so urgent that in February 1496 he began preaching again. Nothing like it had ever been heard, and nothing like it could have been expected to succeed, in the Cathedral of Florence. He not only denounced the prevalent infidelity and immorality, but, in the very heart and centre of all the culture of the Renaissance, he stigmatised the Italian love of beauty as mere lust, and the whole life of the time as despicable frivolity and sensualism. The effect was almost magical. Crowded congregations were dissolved in tears. His numerous followers abandoned festivities and amusements of all kinds. Hymns were heard in every street in place of licentious songs and carnival choruses. Wealthy women laid aside their costly garments and jewellery to dress as plainly as Quakers. Roystering youths became decorous and devout. The bitterest enemies became reconciled. Usurers restored their ill-gotten gains. Nor was this all; for after the expulsion of the Medici, it was Savonarola who drew up the constitution of the new Republic which was then formed, so that the "chattering friar" became in effect and for a time the master of the city. Alexander then changed his tactics, and endeavoured to enlist Savonarola on his side by the offer of a cardinal's hat; but this the Dominican proudly rejected.

Before long, however, the inevitable reaction set in. A number of gay young men, calling themselves "Compagnacci," or bad fellows, desirous of reviving the bacchanalian revels of the

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Medician régime, organised a riotous opposition to the "Piagnoni," or snivellers, as they dubbed the followers of Savonarola. This, of course, only redoubled the energy of the "Piagnoni," who replied by the famous burning of "the vanities," when books, pictures, statuettes, trinkets, carnival dresses, and a thousand other condemned treasures were carried in procession to one of the public squares and burned in huge bonfires, whilst a solemn dance was executed around the sacrificial pyre. The opposition, however, not only obtained ascendancy in the Signoria, and ordered the discontinuance of Savonarola's preaching, but, aided by Piero de' Medici, then living in exile in Rome, they induced the Pope to excommunicate him. He refused to recognise the interdict, and continued his sermons as well as his strenuous exhortations to Charles VIII and other European princes to summon a council for the salvation of the Church. Nothing ever alarmed Alexander VI more than the threat of a council; but in this instance his fears were allayed, and his troublesome opponent silenced in a very singular manner. A Franciscan monk, named Francesco di Puglia, in the course of a sermon preached against Savonarola in the Church of Santa Croce, declared himself ready to go through the ordeal of fire with him in order to prove the falsity of the Dominican's doctrines. Savonarola himself took no notice of the absurd and antiquated challenge, but one of his zealous followers, Fra Domenico Buonvicini of Pescia, eagerly took it up and offered to undergo the ordeal on behalf

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of his master. Francesco di Puglia then artfully retired, on the ground that it was Savonarola he had challenged, and him alone with whom he was willing to enter the fire; and another Franciscan, Fra Giuliano Rondinelli, was put forward to undergo the trial with Buonvicini. The Arrabbiatti and the riotous "Compagnacci" were determined not to let such a good opportunity escape them, hoping to overwhelm the "Piagnoni" with ridicule, and perhaps even, in the tumult which they could easily bring about, to accomplish the assassination of Savonarola.

The Signoria, secretly countenanced by Rome, made all arrangements for the strange contest; and on April 17, 1498, Savonarola, who had at last been persuaded that his witless followers' zeal was due to inspiration from on high, marched at the head of a long procession of his monks to the Piazza in front of the palace. The flames were kindled in the presence of an immense crowd, many of whom confidently expected to see a repetition of the miracle of the fiery furnace described in the Book of Daniel. Savonarola insisted that his champion should bear the Host with him when he entered the fire; whereupon the Franciscans, who were by no means eager to proceed any further, raised a cry of sacrilege; and in one way or another managed to waste most part of the day in disputes about procedure, until in the evening a violent thunderstorm came on, and the Signoria declared that the ordeal could not take place. The disappointed crowd,

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some furious at missing an exciting spectacle, some convinced that Savonarola must be an impostor or he would have entered the fire himself and confounded his enemies, were stimulated by the "Campagnacci" and the Arrabbiatti to attack the Convent of S. Marco, many of the "Piagnoni" were killed or wounded in the streets, and Savonarola, with Fra Domenico and some other of his prominent supporters, were thrown into prison. Alexander VI endeavoured to get the "chattering friar" handed over to his tender mercies in Rome, but the Signoria, though they were quite willing that the tribunal should be directed and presided over by emissaries of the Pope, insisted on the trial taking place in Florence. Under the rack a confession was extorted from Savonarola to the effect that his claim of direct Divine inspiration had been a delusion. This was enough for the Apostolic Commissioners, who condemned him and his two principal supporters as heretics, and sentenced the three of them to be burned to death in the market place and their ashes thrown into the Arno. It is certainly not fair to saddle Alexander VI with the entire responsibility for the ruin and death of Savonarola. From first to last he despised the "chattering friar," but there was sufficient danger in Savonarola's persistent demand for a council to make Alexander quite ready to lend his support to the great Dominican's enemies; and doubtless he sat far more securely in St. Peter's Chair when that powerful voice that called so urgently for reform was silenced for ever.

## V

### CESARE BORGIA, DUKE OF ROMAGNA

ON April 7, 1498, the day of the proposed ordeal by fire which proved so disastrous to Savonarola, Charles VIII of France died suddenly at the early age of twenty-eight. He was succeeded by his equally weak but equally ambitious cousin the Duke of Orleans, who, although announcing his accession to the Pope in most conciliatory terms, left little doubt as to the aggressive policy he intended to pursue by assuming not only the title of Louis XII of France, but that of King of Jerusalem and the Two Sicilies, as well as (by reason of his descent from the Visconti) that of Duke of Milan. Alexander VI at once sent envoys to express his congratulations, though they were instructed to point out at the same time that the new king was expected to make war on the Turks instead of on Italy, that his claims on Milan and on Naples were impracticable, that the liberties of Florence must be respected and Pisa restored to her, that the Orsini and the Colonna should not be employed in the French service, and that Louis must abstain from taking the banished ex-Prefect Giovanni della Rovere under his protection.

Alexander's policy, always governed by con-

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siderations of family advancement, seems to have been from this time forth directed by the greater subtlety and the more vaulting ambition of his son. Cesare had firmly resolved to exchange an ecclesiastical for a secular career; and already he aimed at nothing less than a kingdom. His first scheme was to marry an Aragonese princess, as a step towards acquiring the throne of Naples, where, although Ferrantino had been reinstated with acclamation after the expulsion of the French, the government was weak and threatened both within and without. The Pope accordingly made proposals for a double alliance with the Neapolitan reigning house, his daughter Lucrezia being suggested as a wife for Alfonso, Duke of Bisceglia, a natural son of Alfonso II, whilst Ferrantino's daughter Carlotta, who was to bring the principality of Taranto as a dowry, was suggested as a wife for Cesare. The young princess shrank from marrying "a priest and the son of a priest," and her father refused to hear of the match; but in June Lucrezia was betrothed to Alfonso of Bisceglia, and in the following month the Duke, who was a year younger than Lucrezia, came quietly to Rome and was duly married to the Pope's daughter in the Vatican. Though of a somewhat melancholy cast of countenance, this youth of seventeen was described as the handsomest lad ever seen in Rome. It was expressly agreed that he should remain at the Papal court for a year, and that Lucrezia should not be required to live in Naples during her father's lifetime.



*Cesare Borgia*

1561 - 1567, King of Naples and Duke of Valentinois





## CESARE BORGIA

The failure to bring about Cesare's projected marriage, however, combined with some other unexpected happenings to bring about a change in the Papal policy. A sanguinary conflict had been raging for some time between the Orsini and the Colonna, until on April 12, 1498, notwithstanding their alliance with the Conti, the Orsini suffered a crushing defeat at Palombara. Both factions seem then to have realised that their perpetual conflicts, instead of bringing any advantage to either of them, only played into the hands of the Pope. Accordingly they made peace, sealed their reconciliation by several intermarriages, and placed the settlement of their family disputes in the hands of King Ferrantino of Naples. That this was generally understood as a menace to the Borgia was made plain by a set of verses which the Pope one day found affixed to the door of the Vatican library, in which the Colonna and the Orsini were exhorted to turn their now happily united forces to the succour of their country by slaying the "Bull" now devastating Ansonia and flinging his calves into the Tiber. Meanwhile the Pope had been negotiating with Louis XII. Louis wished to get rid of his wife Joanna, who was childless, in order that he might marry Anne of Brittany, his cousin's widow, who might bring him children, and certainly would bring him the last of the great fiefs not yet joined to the French crown. In order to accomplish this purpose it was necessary for him to obtain a dispensation from the Pope; and Alexander of course seized the

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opportunity to make a bargain to the advantage of himself and his family. It mattered not that Italy must suffer a second invasion, and that both Naples and Milan must be handed over to a foreign foe, so long as Cesare Borgia could obtain a dukedom and a royal bride, whilst Alexander VI obtained protection against the enemies who were now banding together against him.

On August 17 Cesare explained to the cardinals in a Consistory called for the purpose that he had never desired to be a priest, and that having hitherto followed an irksome ecclesiastical career solely out of regard for his father's wishes, he now desired to lay it down, in order that he might marry and devote himself to secular concerns, for which he felt he had more aptitude as well as more inclination. None of the subservient cardinals present raised any objection, several of them perhaps looking forward to a share of the valuable benefices which Cesare perforce resigned together with his red hat. However this may be, the archbishopric of Valencia, at any rate, was not allowed to go out of the family, but was soon afterwards made over to Cardinal Juan Borgia. On the same day the French king's envoy arrived in Rome for the purpose of conducting Cesare to France; the Pope having agreed with Louis XII to send him his dispensation for a divorce on condition of his giving Cesare a dukedom and engaging to procure Ferrantino's consent to the ex-cardinal's marriage with Carlotta of Aragon.

The preparations for Cesare's journey were so

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elaborate that he was not able to set out until October 1. His father had decked him out with more than regal splendour and extravagance; and watched him proudly from a window of the Vatican when he set out on his journey, riding a magnificent horse, clad in a costume of white damask with a mantle of black velvet and wearing a hat with black plumes. He was accompanied by four cardinals, several young Roman nobles, and a numerous retinue scarcely less splendidly equipped than himself, for it is said that their magnificent horses were shod with silver and their saddle-cloths embroidered with pearls. Some hundreds of mules carried his plate and other treasure; and the whole represented 200,000 ducats' worth of property, extracted from the faithful by more or less questionable methods, ostensibly for the propagation of the Christian religion. He embarked at Civita Vecchia in French galleys for Marseilles, where he was received on his arrival with royal honours. At Avignon he was welcomed with great splendour and apparent cordiality by Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, for that wily prelate, seeing no prospect of anything but hopeless exile in continuing his contest with the powerful Borgia, had made his peace with Alexander and was now using every endeavour to promote at the court of France the interests of his bitterest enemy.

Louis XII was with the French camp at Chignon, where Cesare made his formal entry on December 19 with all the barbaric splendour of an Oriental potentate. A detailed account of the pageant has

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been preserved in the *Memoires* of Brantome, where may be found a list of the relay after relay of baggage mules, loaded with trunks spread over with rich coverings embroidered with the Borgian arms; of the sumptuously caparisoned led horses; of the pages on horseback dressed in crimson velvet; of the guards on foot, having stripes of yellow silk over their velvet coats; of the thirty gentlemen clad in cloth of gold and silver; of the kettledrums, the trumpeters, the minstrels carrying instruments of silver slung on chains of gold, with all the rest of the extravagant show. And bringing up the rear of this bright host came the ex-cardinal himself, mounted on a large and stately horse, superbly caparisoned. He was dressed in red satin and cloth of gold powdered all over with large pearls and costly diamonds. Around his cap were double rows of jewels, including six or seven rubies as large as beans. Precious stones glittered all over his apparel, and even his boots were covered with twisted cordage of gold and bordered with pearls. Louis XII is reported to have regarded this absurd and inappropriate display with the contempt it deserved; but he received Cesare with all outward honour, for it was of the utmost importance to him to secure the adhesion of the Pope.

Cesare had brought with him the papal Bull authorising Louis's divorce; and in return duly received his dukedom of Valentinois, with an appropriate revenue. But the French king was unable to persuade either Ferrantino of Naples

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or the Princess Carlotta herself to consent to a marriage with the Pope's son. Meantime Alexander VI was in a critical position. His negotiations with France had alarmed Ludovico Sforza, who, together with Cardinal Ascanio and the Colonna faction, made common cause with Ferrantino of Naples. Towards the end of November the Portuguese envoys remonstrated strongly with the Pope concerning his simony, his nepotism, and his French policy, threatening a council if the latter, which endangered the peace of Italy, were persevered in. It was believed that Cardinal Ascanio hoped, with the aid of the Emperor Maximilian and Ferdinand of Spain, to secure the summoning of a council to dethrone Alexander; and when the Spanish envoys arrived in Rome about the middle of December and used much the same language as the Portuguese had done, the Pope was filled with misgivings. He blamed Louis XII for failing to bring about Cesare's marriage with Carlotta of Aragon; and when the French king concluded a treaty with Venice for the partition of Milan in March 1499 Alexander was doubtful whether or not to throw in his lot with the other side. He endeavoured to conciliate Spain by taking away Benevento from the heirs of the Duke of Gandia and restoring it to the Church, and by other reformatory measures. But when in May he received a letter from Louis XII informing him that in consequence of the failure to secure Carlotta of Aragon, Cesare had been given the hand of Charlotte d'Albret, a princess of the

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royal house of France, his joy was unbounded. Rome was illuminated in celebration of the auspicious event ; and the Pope, openly announcing himself on the French side, declared that the reigning dynasty in Milan must be done away with. This was a final breach with the house of Sforza ; and Cardinal Ascanio, taking all his movable treasure with him, fled from Rome. He was followed shortly afterwards by the Cardinals Colonna and Sanseverino, and also by Lucrezia's husband, Alfonso of Bisceglia, who evidently felt that he would be safer in his native land, notwithstanding that he was the Pope's son-in-law and that Lucrezia seemed genuinely attached to him.

As Louis XII had secured the neutrality of Spain by treaty, and as Florence was fully occupied with Pisa and Maximilian with the Swiss, whilst Ferrantino of Naples thought he had enough to do to look after his own dominions, Ludovico Sforza was left to face the French and Venetians without a single ally. In July 1499 he was attacked simultaneously by the French from the west and the Venetians from the east. Fortress after fortress rapidly fell to his enemies, either by cowardice or by treachery. On September 1, finding his situation hopeless, he fled to the Tyrol ; and no sooner had he left Milan than the city opened its gates to the enemy. On learning the rapid success of his generals Louis XII left Lyons for Milan ; and on October 6 he entered the city in triumph as its rightful duke amidst the acclamations of the populace. He was accompanied by

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the Princes of Savoy, Montferrat, Ferrara, and Mantua; by the envoys of Genoa, Florence, Siena, Luca and Pisa; by the Cardinals d'Amboise and Giuliano della Rovere, and by Cesare Borgia, Duke of Valentinois, who had left his duchess in Dauphiné whilst he went on to push his fortunes under the ægis of the French king. He had been married to Charlotte d'Albret on May 10 quite quietly in the Queen's apartments of the château of Blois, in the presence of the King. Nine days later he was solemnly invested with the order of St. Michael. Notwithstanding his disappointment of an Aragonese marriage, Cesare seems to have exerted himself to please his wife, who, for her part, appears to have become deeply in love with the handsome but heartless adventurer. When he left Dauphiné for Milan with Louis XII he had lived with her for four months; and he never set eyes on her again. Presumably he must have had some correspondence with her, but not a letter of it has ever been found.

The Pope made no concealment of his delight at the success of the French arms, which bade fair to turn out so favourably for Cesare's advancement. All his children were now away from Rome. Donna Sancia had been banished to Naples; and her husband Giuffré had been sent with his sister to Spoleto, of which town her father had made Lucrezia regent. In September he went to Nepi, which town also he bestowed upon his beloved daughter. Whilst there her husband was persuaded to return to her; and presently Duke

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Cesare joined the family party. It was probably at this time that the Pope and his son took counsel together as to the best method of advancing the family fortunes, and that it was agreed upon that Cesare should conquer and extirpate the reigning families of the Romagna and weld the whole of that territory into one principality for himself. In return for the Pope's support, Louis XII placed a portion of his army at Cesare's disposal, with the stipulation that operations should be undertaken only against those families who had supported the cause of the Sforza. Of course the expedition was ostensibly made in the interests of the Church. The "tyrants" of the network of small principalities in Romagna and the Marches were nominally vicars of the Church, but their relations with their feudal lord were of such a character that it was easy for any Pope who was so minded to pick a quarrel with them. Alexander's pretext was that the Lords of Rimini, Pesaro, Faenza, Imola, Forli, Urbino and Camerino had forfeited their estates by non-payment of tribute. A Bull to this effect was issued in October; and in less than a month Cesare started on his campaign.

At the head of an army which, including his French and Swiss auxiliaries, numbered some 8000 men, Cesare swooped down upon Imola and Forli, which were held by Caterina Sforza as regent for her son. The people of Imola opened their gates without any attempt at defence, and on December 1 the governor, who had shut himself up in the fortress, was forced to capitulate also. The Duke



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then turned his attention to Forli, the inhabitants of which likewise offered no resistance; but the amazonian Caterina, entrenching herself in her citadel, defied Cesare Borgia, as she had previously defied the murderers of her husband eleven years previously. Once, in the course of a parley, she all but succeeded in entrapping Cesare into the citadel; and the Borgia alleged that one of her adherents was sent to Rome to poison the Pope by means of an infected letter. Caterina held out for six weeks, but on January 12, 1500, her fortress was stormed by the French troops and she was led away a prisoner. Almost at the same moment Cesare received intelligence of the death of his relative, Cardinal Giovanni Borgia the younger. Giovanni had been in Cesare's camp a few days previously, and had ridden as far as Urbino on his way to Rome when he heard of the Duke's success, and, although then suffering from fever, mounted his mule in order to return and offer his congratulations in person. But the hand of death was upon him and before he could get beyond Fossombrone he expired. He had been at variance with his powerful relatives; and at a later date, when the deadly danger of the Borgian enmity became more apparent, Cesare was suspected of having poisoned him. But this rumour seems to have had no good foundation. The dead cardinal's remains were carried to Rome and interred with little ceremony in S. Maria del Popolo, whilst his benefices, of course, were promptly transferred to another member of the family.

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Cesare, being now master of Cesena, Imola and Forli, was in a good strategical position for pursuing his conquests, and was preparing to proceed against Pesaro when his campaign received an unexpected check. Machiavelli aptly remarks that people change their prince in the hope of bettering their condition, but that in this they are most commonly disappointed, because the new prince is obliged to quarter his army on them, to tax them, and to make them suffer a thousand inconveniences which are the natural results of conquest. And he points out that this is why Louis XII so quickly subdued Milan, and lost it again as quickly. The people who had so readily opened their gates to him were very soon greatly angered by the rapacity of the French governor Trivulzio, they could not brook the foreigner's haughtiness, and finding themselves deceived in their hopes of a better condition they revolted, and recalled their banished Duke Ludovico, who on February 5, 1500, at the head of a body of Swiss and German mercenaries, re-entered Milan. Ludovico immediately attacked the French forces in Lombardy; and as a consequence the troops which Louis XII had lent to Cesare Borgia were suddenly recalled. Without their assistance it was impossible for him to continue his campaign; and accordingly he returned to Rome.

His entry into the Eternal City on February 26 was made with extravagant pomp and magnificence. He was met by all the cardinals, the foreign ambassadors, the nobility, and the magistrates of

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Rome. Preceded by gorgeous heralds, and surrounded by a bodyguard of Gascons dressed in black, the Duke rode through the crowded streets to the Vatican, simply but strikingly attired in black velvet, with a gold chain of curious workmanship around his neck. Kneeling before the Papal throne he made a short speech in Spanish, rendering thanks for the honours and favours bestowed upon him, and expressing his devotion to the Holy See ; to which the Pope briefly replied in the same language. Alexander gave no more audiences that day, and seemed beside himself with joy, weeping and laughing at the same moment. Next day a masque of the triumph of Julius Cæsar was represented in the Piazza Navona, with twelve gorgeous cars decorated after the manner of the ancients, in which, amongst other trophies, appeared the amazonian Caterina Sforza, like another Queen of Palmyra, fettered with chains of gold. The triumph over, Caterina was cast into one of the dungeons of St. Angelo, where her days would soon have been numbered had not the French, who admired the courageous virago's defence of Forli, secured her release, and enabled her to find asylum in one of the convents of Florence.

At twenty-five years of age Cesare Borgia had become the most influential man in the Papal dominions. On March 29 the Pope made him Standard Bearer of the Church (an office that had been filled by his murdered brother Giovanni), and conferred upon him the coveted distinction of the Golden Rose. All the fortresses of the Holy See were placed in

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the hands of his retainers ; and it was currently reported that even in such a matter as the nomination of cardinals the voice of the Duke of Valentinois would overrule every other. His portrait by Leonardo da Vinci, now in the Museo Civico at Venice (if indeed it be his portrait), bears out the tradition that he was the handsomest man of his time. He was of graceful and dignified carriage, and an athlete of herculean strength. He professed an interest in art, in literature and in music. His speech was eloquent and persuasive ; his gaiety of spirit, at least in his earlier days, unfailing and contagious ; his way of life liberal and magnificent to extravagance. But all these superficially attractive qualities were governed and held in strictest subordination by an iron will, a cool and penetrating intellect, and a fixed conviction that he, the superman, was justified in adopting any means for the attainment of his own personal ends. Machiavelli in his *Principe* did not exaggerate, but merely codified and set down in black and white the principles of Cesare Borgia's consistent practice.

He had not long to wait before another of the rapid and tragic changes of fortune with which the history of the time is filled opened the way for further exploits in the Romagna. Two months after his triumphant return to Milan, Ludovico Sforza, betrayed by his own captains, and defeated by a fresh army under La Tremouille which Louis XII had instantly despatched against him from France, was captured as he was endeavouring to escape disguised as a common soldier in the

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ranks of his Swiss auxiliaries, and carried away a prisoner into France. When he was conducted to Lyons, where Louis XII was at the time, says Guicciardini, an infinite number of spectators flocked from all parts to behold a prince, so lately at the height of grandeur and majesty, now fallen into the most abject misery, and not able to obtain the favour, though he earnestly desired it, of being admitted to the King's presence. This handsome and cultured prince, "the Pericles of Milan," who from mere lust of power had dispossessed (and perhaps murdered) his nephew, and who, from the necessity of buttressing his own usurped dominion, had been the first to invite the French into Italy, was now thrown into a gloomy dungeon in the fortress of Loches in Touraine, where he was left to pine away in dismal solitude the remaining ten years of his chequered life. His brother, Cardinal Ascanio, also fell into the hands of the French, and was imprisoned at Bourges, where he remained until January 1502. He never saw Rome again during the lifetime of Alexander VI; but he went thither in 1503 to assist in the election, as it was hoped, of Cardinal d'Amboise; and he died there of the plague in May 1505.

Whilst Cesare Borgia was possessing himself of Imola and Forli, the Pope had not remained idle. One of his favourite schemes from the first had been to seize the hereditary possessions of the Roman barons and settle them on his own children. He now turned on the Gaetani. The head of this ancient family was the prothonotary Giacomo,

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whom Alexander succeeded in luring to Rome, when he was instantly cast into the Castle of St. Angelo whilst the Papal forces took possession of Sermoneta, the central town of the Gaetani domains in the Campagna. The estates of the family were then declared to be confiscated by rebellion; and the town of Sermoneta was conferred on the beloved daughter Lucrezia, who was already mistress of Nepi and Spoleto. Shortly afterwards Giacomo Gaetani died in his prison, and it was currently reported that he had been poisoned.

About this time the Pope himself had more than one narrow escape from death. In the spring he had had an attack of fever, which was dangerous enough to cause a report of his death and the appearance of a savage Latin satire in which his Holiness was represented as holding a dialogue with the King of Terrors, and begging to be allowed to die in the arms of one of his concubines. On June 28 a heavy iron chandelier fell to the floor just in front of him; and on the following day a more serious accident happened. On the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, just as the Pope was about to give audience, a sudden tornado tore off part of the roof of the building, and blew down a chimney which crashed through to the room in which his Holiness was sitting. Three gentlemen-in-waiting were killed, and it was thought for some little time that the Pope must have suffered the same fate. When at length, however, a way was made through the dust and debris, Alexander was found still sitting on his throne, unconscious and bleeding from the

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head and the right hand, but not dangerously injured. The balcony over his head had protected him from the falling masonry, and the hangings of his throne had saved him from suffocation by the subsequent dust. He soon recovered from his wounds and the shock, and two days afterwards went to the Church of S. Maria del Popolo to offer his thanks, together with three hundred crowns, to the Virgin, under whose special protection he believed himself always to be. "Any other man," says the Catholic historian Pastor, "would have been led by such a series of narrow escapes to look into himself and consider his ways; but Alexander was a true Borgia; he thanked God and the Blessed Virgin and SS. Peter and Paul for preserving him, and went on living just the same as before." A few months later the Venetian ambassador remarked in one of his letters to the Signoria that, although seventy years of age, the Pope seemed to grow younger every day, that he was always merry and careless, and troubled about nothing in the world but the aggrandisement of his children.

All the Pope's family came to Rome for the Jubilee. Lucrezia had returned thither from Nepi in the previous October; and on November 1 she had given birth to a son, who was named, after his grandfather, Rodrigo. Her young husband, to whom she appears to have been sincerely attached, was with her, having been to all appearance reconciled with his shiftY father-in-law. It was observed by the wondering crowds of pilgrims, who

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filled the Eternal City and the Pope's coffers at the same time during this year of Jubilee, that bishops only were allowed to celebrate Mass to Madonna Lucrezia, bishops waited on her in the Vatican, bishops conducted her from place to place. Whenever she appeared abroad it was in royal state, attended by no less than two hundred ladies and gentlemen on horseback. But in the midst of all this splendour and happiness came a bolt from the blue. On the night of July 15, as he was leaving the Vatican to return home, the Duke of Bisceglia was attacked by a number of masked men with daggers on the very steps of the Pope's palace, who wounded him severely in various parts of his body before he succeeded in escaping from them. The assassins made off under the escort of a body of forty horsemen, and got safely out of the city, whilst the wounded prince staggered back into the Vatican. He refused all medical help, because, as he wrote to the King of Naples, his own physician had endeavoured to poison him ; but Lucrezia and his sister Sancia took him in charge, and he was nursed back to convalescence. The Venetian ambassador reported that it was not known who had wounded the Duke, but it was believed to be the same hand that had murdered the Duke of Gandia. Alfonso himself was convinced that it was the doing of his terrible brother-in-law Cesare, and he burned for revenge. There is no positive proof that Cesare had had any hand in the matter so far, though it is highly probable that he knew well enough what was afoot. He hated



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the whole House of Aragon, and had been specially angered against Alfonso of Bisceglia. Lucrezia's marriage with this youth had been arranged merely to further his own designs on the Neapolitan crown, and was now as valueless as her previous alliance with the Lord of Pesaro. It would be extremely useful to have her free to enter into another matrimonial engagement more advantageous to his present projects. But Alfonso could not be set aside in the way Giovanni Sforza had been, because Lucrezia had already borne him a son; and according to the Borgian logic it followed that he must be got rid of by some other means.

As to what happened afterwards there are two discrepant and, as regards details, flatly contradictory accounts. According to the one story, Cesare having visited the wounded man and found that he bade fair to make a good recovery, called in his trusted henchman, Don Michelotto, thrust the two princesses out of the room, and had the Duke strangled in his bed. According to the other, and more likely story, Alfonso was looking out of his chamber window one day, when, seeing Cesare walking in the Vatican garden, he seized hold of a bow and discharged an arrow at the hated enemy whom he believed responsible for the recent attempt on his own life. But the bolt missed, and Cesare immediately sent some of his bodyguard to cut the Duke in pieces. The essential fact, however, is undisputed. On August 18 the Duke of Bisceglia was murdered; and Cesare Borgia openly acknowledged the authorship of the deed, alleging that he

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merely acted in self-defence, because Bisceglia had endeavoured to kill him. The Pope evidently wished to hush up the whole matter ; and when Lucrezia was found unable to control her grief, she was sent away by Cesare's desire to recover her equanimity in the quiet city of Nepi.

Meanwhile Cesare, who had taken his father's recent narrow escapes from death as a warning to put his own affairs in order, set about making the necessary preparations for the prosecution of his projects in the Romagna. Venice was induced to withdraw its protection from Rimini and Faenza in return for promise of Papal aid against the Turks. And in order to provide the necessary money twelve new cardinals were created, including two Borgia, four other Spaniards, and Cesare's brother-in-law Amadeo d'Albret, who altogether contributed 120,000 ducats to his war-chest in exchange for their red hats. By the end of September he was ready, and on October 1 he set out from Rome at the head of 10,000 men. His army was mainly composed of bands of mercenaries, including the troops of Gianpaolo Baglioni of Perugia, Vitellozzo Vitelli of Cita di Castello, and several barons of the Savelli and Orsini families. The first place to be attacked was Pesaro, the domain of his sometime brother-in-law Giovanni Sforza. Being hopeless of defending his hereditary possessions against such overwhelming odds, Giovanni sought safety in flight ; and as soon as Cesare had thus taken possession of Pesaro without striking a blow, he proceeded along the coast to

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Rimini. Pandolfo Malatesta likewise took to flight without making any attempt to defend himself; and, having left a sufficient garrison in both places, Cesare marched his force against Faenza. This small place gave him rather more trouble, for its ruler, Astorre Manfredi, a handsome and amiable youth of eighteen, was beloved by his subjects, who defended their town with such bravery and resolution that on the approach of winter Cesare was compelled to raise the siege. In the following March, however, he returned to the attack; and on April 25, 1501, the brave defenders were compelled by hunger to surrender. According to the terms of capitulation the persons and effects of the citizens were to be respected, and young Astorre Manfredi left free to go where he pleased unmolested. But young Astorre Manfredi was beloved by his people, favoured by both Venice and Florence, and supported by his relatives the Bentivogli of Bologna. Consequently he was too dangerous a claimant to leave at large; and in spite of the capitulations he was never allowed to leave Cesare's camp until he was sent under a guard to Rome to be thrown into the Castle of St. Angelo. A wise and prudent conqueror, says Machiavelli, having Cesare Borgia in his eye, destroys the ruling families whom he dispossesses. Therefore we need not be surprised to learn that some few months afterwards the strangled remains of young Astorre and his brother Octavian were found floating in the Tiber.

The family of Bentivoglio was the next to be

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attacked ; not only because Giovanni Bentivoglio had given some assistance to his young relative Manfredi in the defence of Faenza, but also because Cesare had set hungry eyes upon Bologna as a suitable capital for the extensive principality he was carving out for himself in the Romagna. Bologna, however, was under the express protection of France, and Louis XII sent orders to Cesare not to attack the place. The Pope then intervened with the plea that, according to treaty, Bologna was entitled to French protection only so far as that did not infringe upon the rights of the Holy See. Not knowing what might not be made out of this point by the subtle Borgia, Giovanni Bentivoglio was glad to compromise the matter by giving up Castel Bolognese to the Church and agreeing to supply Cesare with 300 horsemen for a period of five years. Cesare having thus made himself lord of a large territory which included the cities of Imola, Forli, Pesaro, Rimini, Faenza, Cesena and Fano, the Pope, in open Consistory, created him Duke of Romagna, apparently untroubled in conscience, as Gregorovius remarks, by any such consideration as that the making of this large province hereditary in the Borgian family would necessarily entail the severance of all its component states from the Church.

But Cesare's ambition was by no means confined to the Romagna. As soon as he was prohibited from attacking Bologna he turned his attention to Tuscany ; and having seized upon Bessighella, the key of the Val di Lamone, he sent a messenger to

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the Signoria of Florence informing them that he was leading his troops back to Rome, and demanding in no very civil terms a free passage through the territories of the Republic. The Florentines, knowing with whom they had to deal, and being exhausted by their war with Pisa, were in great alarm, especially as some of Cesare's captains, the Orsini and Vitelli, were partisans of the threatening Medici. They sent an envoy to treat with the Duke of Romagna, but also at the same time sent off post haste to implore the assistance of Louis XII. After some temporising, Cesare received permission to pass through the territories of the Republic, but only with small bodies of troops at a time, and without either the Orsini or the Vitelli. Cesare haughtily marched on, unheeding the conditions and allowing his soldiers to pillage as they went ; until, seeing there was danger of a general rising against him, and knowing well enough that Louis XII, whose aids were already on the way, would not allow him to attack Florence, he sent word to the Signoria that he desired to be on terms of friendship with them, and would even accept an engagement as condottiere in their pay, provided they allowed him free passage in his present expedition against Piombino, and that they consented to the recall of Piero de' Medici. The restoration of the Medici was altogether out of the question, as they told him plainly, but as the Florentines could not get rid of the menacing Duke otherwise, they made a treaty of perpetual alliance with him, and engaged him as their condottiere

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for three years at a salary of 36,000 ducats. It was stipulated that he was always to be ready to bring 300 men-at-arms to the assistance of the Republic in an emergency, but three months' notice was to be given of any other services that were required, in which latter cases he was not bound to come in person, though he might be obliged to accompany the French expedition against Naples. This was undoubtedly a sharper's agreement on both sides. The Florentines being under obligation to furnish men-at-arms for the French king, thought that if they were forced to pay Cesare this money it might serve both purposes; whilst Cesare, on his part, knowing that he would have to go with the French in any case, was glad to make the Florentines answerable for the cost. Moreover, whilst the Florentines agreed to pay Cesare 36,000 ducats a year in order to get rid of his awkward presence at the moment, they counted upon finding some means of avoiding the payment; and although Cesare was well aware of this, he was quite satisfied with the agreement, because a failure to pay would afford him an excellent excuse for further aggressive action in Tuscany whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself. He therefore continued his march to Piombino. But before he had succeeded in reducing Jacopo Appiano to subjection the Pope recalled him to Rome.

The French army under d'Aubigny was already encamped in the neighbourhood when the envoys of France and Spain made the Pope acquainted for the first time with a treaty which their respec-

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tive masters had made secretly in the preceding November for the partition of the kingdom of Naples. The "Catholic" Ferdinand and the "most Christian" Louis XII had not failed to find a religious pretext for their act of robbery. It was alleged that Ferrantino had invited the Turks to Italy to assist him against his enemies; and Alexander VI, who undoubtedly had invited the Turks to Italy to assist him against *his* enemies in 1494, now, on this ground, proclaimed Ferrantino deposed as a traitor to his country, and agreed to the partition of that country between two hungry foreign foes. Ferdinand was to have Calabria and Apulia with the title of Grand Duke, whilst Louis XII was to have the capital and the rest of the provinces with the title of King of Naples; both monarchs promising to take an oath of vassalage to the Holy See. In thus abandoning the traditional policy of Rome, Alexander VI, of course, was actuated as usual by family and personal considerations. In the first place, the alliance between France and Spain, and the deposition of Ferrantino, would deprive the Roman barons of all external support, and place the estates of the Colonna, in particular, at his mercy. And, in the second place, he shrewdly counted on the quarrels which would inevitably arise when two jealous powers had divided the Aragonese dominions between them to bring about such a condition of things as might fulfil his long-cherished dream of placing one of his sons on the throne of Naples.

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After the Pope had entertained d'Aubigny, d'Allegres, and the other generals with great hospitality, including the provision of a liberal number of Roman courtesans, the French army set out for the conquest of Naples on June 28, accompanied by the Duke of Romagna with 300 lances as well as by several bodies of his mercenary troops under Vitellozzo Vitelli, Oliverotto da Fermo, and other condottiere in his pay. Ferrantino, in ignorance of the secret treaty, had counted upon the support of Spain; but as soon as the French troops appeared on his frontier the Spanish general, Gonsalvo de Cordova, threw off his mask, and Ferrantino found himself between two fires. Leaving Prospero Colonna in command at Naples, he then retired to Capua, which was held for him by Fabrizio Colonna. But on July 24 that city was stormed and taken by the French, who sacked the place and butchered the inhabitants with the greatest brutality. Seven thousand persons were slain; and Guicciardini declares that even the cloistered virgins were sacrificed to the lust or avarice of the brutal soldiery. Some, in despair, threw themselves into the river and were drowned; but many were outraged and many were afterwards sold into ignominious slavery in Rome. On August 19 the French entered Naples, and Ferrantino, who had fled to Ischia, surrendered to Louis XII. Such was the end of the Aragonese dynasty in Naples. Ferrantino accepted the duchy of Anjou with an annual pension of 30,000 ducats. He died at Tours on September 9, 1504; and with

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the death of his sons soon afterwards the Neapolitan house of Aragon became extinct.

The Pope did not wait for the fall of Naples before commencing to plunder the families of Colonna and Savelli. In anticipation of the coming storm, the Colonna tried to shelter themselves by giving up the keys of their fortresses to the College of Cardinals; but Alexander would not hear of this, and insisted on their being delivered to him. Amongst these places was the rich Abbey of Subiaco, which Cardinal Colonna had received as the price of his vote at Alexander's election. As early as June 23 twenty vassals of the family came to Rome to swear fealty to the Pope, each one receiving in return a gold ducat and a pair of stockings. Immediately after the fall of Capua Alexander went in person to inspect the garrisons he had placed in some of these fortresses, and to visit Sermoneta. It was on this occasion that he committed what even his apologists are bound to admit was a scandalous and unheard of breach of decorum by appointing his daughter Lucrezia regent during his absence, with power to open all his correspondence and attend to all the business of the Vatican. The spectacle of a young and beautiful woman, the acknowledged daughter of the Holy Father, presiding over the cardinals in Consistory, shows us more convincingly than a thousand satires, as Gregorovius remarks, to what a depth of shameless secularisation the Papacy had sunk. Soon after the Pope's return a Bull was issued excommunicating the Colonna and the

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Savelli, who were declared to be rebels and their property confiscated on account of their league with Ferrantino of Naples. A small part of the Savelli estates was conferred on Giovanni Paolo Orsini, whom it was politic to favour for the time being; but the bulk of the plunder, which of course remained in the family of the Borgia, enabled Alexander to found two more dukedoms. The duchy of Sermoneta, which included Nimfa, Cisterna, Nettuno, Ardea, Nerni, Albano, and other towns or villages to the number of twenty-eight, was given to Lucrezia's infant son Rodrigo; and the dukedom of Nepi, which included the towns of Palestrina, Olevano, Paliano, Frascati, and Anticoli with some twenty other places, was conferred upon the three-year-old Giovanni Borgia, that mysterious "Infans Romanus" who had been legitimised by a Bull on September 1 as the natural son of Cesare and immediately afterwards by a second Bull of the same date as the son of the Pope himself. The greater part of the states of the Church had now passed into the hands of the Borgia; for, whilst these two dukedoms absorbed the hereditary estates of the three principal Roman barons, the dukedom of Romagna had absorbed most of the other princely fiefs.

Quickly following upon this came the announcement that a marriage had been arranged between the Pope's daughter Lucrezia and Alfonso d'Este, heir-apparent to the dukedom of Ferrara; another piece of family advancement which Alexander had accomplished in consequence of his acquiescence

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in the partition of Naples. It was a capital stroke of diplomacy, for it would bring to the support of the Pope and Cesare not only Ferrara itself, which was just rising to the position of influence which Florence had formerly possessed in the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, but also Urbino and Mantua, both of which were closely allied by marriage to the House of Este. A league of Cesare's present states with Ferrara, Mantua, and Urbino, backed by all the influence of the Papacy, and allied to France, would probably enable him to accomplish his cherished designs upon Bologna and Florence, and to defy any likely combination of enemies against the House of Borgia. But it had been no easy matter to bring about. The pride of the Este, one of the oldest princely houses in Italy, had revolted against a union with the bastard of a Borgia, who had been married twice already, and whose reputation had been smirched, whether falsely or truly, by the most abominable scandals. Alfonso was strongly prepossessed against the lady ; and his father, Duke Ercole, at first rejected the Pope's offer with disdain. Alexander was not surprised, but he quietly persisted in pointing out the advantages of such an alliance to Ferrara, and the serious disadvantages that would attend a refusal. Louis XII's support of this project had been secured as part of the return for the Pope's consent to the expedition against Naples ; and in the end Duke Ercole was forced to yield to the pressure brought to bear upon him by the French king. Alfonso, however, would not consent until his

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father assured him that unless he gave way he, Duke Ercole, would be compelled to marry Lucrezia himself. In announcing the engagement to his kinsman Gonzaga of Mantua, it is noticeable that Duke Ercole speaks of his affianced wife not as the Pope's daughter but as "the illustrious Lady Lucrezia, sister of the illustrious Duke of Romagna and Valentinois"; and he makes no secret of the fact that he has consented from considerations of policy and the persistent urging of the French king.

But though thus forced into giving his consent, Ercole had not failed to bargain for all he could get. He insisted on a dowry of 100,000 golden ducats, the cession of the two cities of Ceuto and Castel della Pieve, which belonged to the Archbishopric of Bologna, on the relinquishment to the House of Este of a large number of lucrative benefices, and on the remission of Ferrara's yearly tribute as a fief of the Church. Alexander did not much like the terms, and roundly denounced Ercole as "a tradesman"; but being strongly urged to accept by Cesare, who was anxious for the alliance on account of its political advantage to himself, he at length, after a good deal of wrangling, agreed to all the Duke of Ferrara's demands. The nuptial contract was accordingly signed on September 1, and was announced in Rome three days later by the illumination of the Vatican and the thunder of the guns of St. Angelo. Lucrezia, perhaps unaware of Alfonso's aversion, did not attempt to conceal her joy. Though she

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had already lost two husbands, one by divorce and one by murder, she was only twenty-one years of age ; and her vanity was doubtless deeply gratified by the prospect of becoming reigning Duchess of Ferrara and a member of one of the oldest of the princely houses of Italy. It was no more than a year since the tragedy of her second husband's assassination ; but Lucrezia, who possessed a full measure of her father's light-hearted carelessness, could fling her whole little soul into the fleeting pleasures of the passing moment and let the dead past bury its dead.

On the morning following the announcement of her betrothal Lucrezia went in procession, gorgeously attired, accompanied by four bishops and surrounded by a brilliant suite of three hundred nobles and ladies, to the Church of S. Maria del Popolo to offer up her thanks and ask the blessing of Heaven on her approaching nuptials ; and then, in the course of the subsequent festivities to celebrate the event, she nearly danced herself into a fever. The rejoicings were kept up for several weeks ; masquerades and races and bull-fights entertained the populace, comedies were performed in the Vatican, and the Ferrarese ambassador reports that at the Pope's palace the whole of every night, until two or three o'clock in the morning, was spent in dancing and in play. It would be absurd, of course, to judge either the ladies or the priests of the Italian Renaissance according to our modern notions of decorum ; but some of the Borgian amusements were of so

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licentious a character that even contemporary libertines were shocked. If such charges rested solely on the authority of an anonymous hostile pamphlet, like the "Letter to Silvio Savelli," they might perhaps be dismissed as false and malicious libels ; but the evidence of Burchard, the Pope's precise and pedantic Master of the Ceremonies, is irrefutable. Without the slightest trace of feeling, or the remotest hint of blame, this phlegmatic diarist records as the merest matter of fact the unprintable details of a scandalous orgy in the Vatican, when Cesare Borgia introduced a company of fifty nude courtesans to amuse the company after supper ; and on another occasion relates with the same *sang-froid* how the Pope and his daughter sat at a window of the Vatican and laughed at an even more lewd and revolting spectacle which the Holy Father himself had devised for their entertainment.

## VI

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So little faith had the Duke of Ferrara in the promise of a Borgia, and so anxious was he to have securities in hand for all the concessions he had demanded, that three months elapsed after the betrothal before he could be persuaded to send for his son's bride. At length, however, on December 9, 1501, a brilliant cavalcade of more than fifteen hundred persons set out to fetch Lucrezia to her new home. At their head were Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, with two other brothers of the bridegroom; and besides members of the ducal family, the escort included a number of magnificently apparelled nobles, several bishops, and a crowd of friends and vassals of the House of Ferrara. There were 580 horses and mules and fifty waggons to carry the necessary baggage. After a tedious and uncomfortable journey of thirteen days, they arrived, wet through and bespattered with mud, at Monterosi, a castle belonging to the Pope, situated about fifteen miles from Rome. Here they halted to make themselves presentable for a ceremonious entry, and sent a herald to receive the Pope's commands. Answer arrived that arrangements had been made

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to meet them at the Porta del Popolo the next day.

It was a red-letter day in the annals of the House of Borgia, and Alexander had determined that it should be celebrated with all the theatrical splendour at his command. At the Ponte Molle the visitors were met by the Governor and senators of Rome, who came out to salute them, preceded by drums and trumpets, and accompanied by two thousand men. After this preliminary ceremony, the embassy was met at half-a-bowshot from the city gate by the Duke of Romagna and his suite, with a following of four thousand men. First came six pages dressed in silk tunics of the Duke's colours, black and yellow; after these followed a hundred mounted gentlemen of the Duke's service; then two hundred Swiss guards, carrying halberds, clothed in black and yellow velvet, and wearing black and yellow plumes in their hats. When these had formed up as a guard of honour, the Duke himself, followed by a numerous train, advanced to meet the head of the embassy. His splendid appearance seems to have created a great impression. He was dressed in a silk tunic of the French fashion, fastened by a golden belt, and he rode a splendid charger, whose harness was completely covered with gold and pearls and other jewels to the value, as the Venetian ambassador declares, of 10,000 ducats. After embracing Cardinal Ippolito, Cesare rode by his side to the city gate, where the embassy was met by nineteen cardinals, each attended by two hundred followers,

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and the formal ceremonies, including an oration, occupied more than two hours. This ended, the visitors proceeded over the Corso to the Vatican. As they passed the Castle of St. Angelo they were saluted by a salvo of artillery, which frightened some of the horses and threw the cavaleade into disorder ; but they reached the Apostolic Palace at last, and were warmly received by his Holiness, who advanced to meet them accompanied by a suite of twelve cardinals. After they had kissed his feet, Cardinal Ippolito and his brothers were raised up and embraced by the Pope, who expressed his great pleasure at seeing them, made kind inquiries as to their journey, and altogether pleased them very much by his amiability and condescension. Then the Duke of Romagna conducted the Princes to the apartments of his sister.

The beautiful and clever Isabella Gonzaga, Marchioness of Mantua, had sent a special agent to Rome in order to be supplied with full details of Lucrezia's dress and appearance and of all the wedding festivities. From the report of this agent, *El Prete*, which is preserved in the archives of Mantua, we learn that Lucrezia was dressed in a mulberry-coloured gown embroidered with gold, the sleeves tight and cut in the Spanish fashion, an outer robe, lined with ermine, which reached nearly to her feet, a head-dress of green velvet trimmed with gold fringe and pearls, and round her neck a string of pearls with a pendant. She advanced to meet her visitors leaning on the arm of some court official, an old gentleman in black

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velvet, who wore a gold chain round his neck. There had been some discussion, El Prete says, concerning the manner in which the cardinal and his brothers were to address Lucrezia, so as to exhibit some degree of brotherly love and at the same time the respect due to her exalted position. The matter had been referred to the Pope's Master of the Ceremonies, who ruled that the brothers must not kiss her, but pay their addresses in the way ladies of the blood-royal of France were accustomed to be approached in public by their relatives. Accordingly, after Lucrezia had bowed to them graciously, conversed for a few minutes, offered them refreshments, and distributed amongst them certain small gifts of jewellery, the envoys retired from her august presence, and were conducted to the apartments prepared for them in the Apostolic Palace.

Duke Ercole had made an excellent political bargain over the match, but apparently he was still greatly disturbed by the black rumours that had been circulated concerning the character of the young woman whom he had been forced to accept as his eldest son's wife, for the Ferrarese ambassador had been instructed to make every inquiry and to report the exact truth. This good man, however, seems to have fallen an easy conquest to the characteristic charm of the Borgian manner. On the very evening of his arrival he wrote off to say it was impossible to credit any sinister reports about such a lovely and gracious lady. She is not only very beautiful, he declares, but modest and

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decorous likewise. Moreover, she is a devout Christian, for to-morrow she goes to confession, and in Christmas week she will receive the Communion. He has had a long conversation with her, has found her extremely intelligent, and is quite sure that both the Duke and his illustrious son will be highly pleased with her.

Alexander had wished the marriage of his daughter to be solemnised by the head of the Christian Church in the Apostolic Palace in Rome, but a committee of cardinals learned in ecclesiastical law decided that the marriage ceremony had already been performed by proxy in Ferrara and could not be repeated. But although he could not have a full church service in the chapel of St. John the Evangelist, the Pope arranged for a splendid ceremony in his own apartments in the Vatican. On the evening of December 30, Lucrezia, accompanied by fifty maids of honour and a bevy of courtiers, was escorted by the Ferrarese envoys from her own palace to the Vatican. Nicolo Cagnolo describes her as a slight graceful figure of middle height, with well-formed neck and bust, an oval face, delicately shaped Grecian nose, grey eyes, golden hair, a rather large mouth with beautiful white teeth, and an amiable and lively countenance. Isabella Gonzaga's agent, El Prete, completes the portrait by telling us what she wore. She was dressed on this occasion, he says, in an overmantle of gold brocade, made in the French fashion with open sleeves. Beneath this was a dress of crimson silk bordered with

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ermine. At the back of her head she wore a cap of dark-coloured silk shot with gold thread. Her golden hair fell over her shoulders, and was merely held together by a narrow black riband. Round her neck was a string of large pearls from which hung a pendant of precious stones of great value.

Seated on his throne and surrounded by thirteen cardinals, the Pope awaited the bridal party in the Sala Paolina. Then, in the presence of a brilliant throng, which included the Duke of Romagna and the ambassadors of France, Spain, and Venice, Lucrezia stood at a table side by side with Don Ferrante, who acted as his brother's proxy, whilst the Bishop of Adria delivered a wedding sermon. When this good prelate's eloquence was exhausted, or rather when it had been cut short by the impatient Pope, Don Ferrante placed the wedding ring on the bride's finger, and the completion of the ceremony was duly attested by a notary. Immediately afterwards Cardinal Ippolito d'Este presented the Duke of Ferrara's present to his daughter-in-law, which consisted of a small casket containing chains, rings, pearls, and other jewellery to the value of 70,000 ducats. Other wedding gifts were then presented by the various cardinals and ambassadors, after which the guests went to the windows to watch the entertainments which were going on in the Piazza of St. Peter. Fireworks, free theatres, horse-races, reviews of troops, tournaments, bull-fights, and mimic battles, amused the

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Roman populace for a full week, until the day arrived for Lucrezia to set out on her journey to Ferrara.

The Pope equipped his daughter as if she were a queen. In addition to the 100,000 ducats in cash which he paid over to Duke Ercole, Lucrezia carried with her to Ferrara silver plate to the value of 30,000 ducats, jewellery, dresses, linen, and other household furniture, trappings for horses and mules, &c., worth another 100,000 ducats. Amongst other costly articles enumerated by the Mantuan agent were a single dress said to be worth 15,000 ducats or more, and two hundred chemises, some of which, being trimmed with gold fringe, were worth a hundred ducats apiece. One hundred and fifty mules were required to carry her baggage; and so large was her retinue that Alexander provided a thousand horses and mules, as well as two hundred carriages for their transport. A cardinal, Francesco Borgia, Archbishop of Cosenza, accompanied her as Legate; the city of Rome and the Roman nobility sent several special representatives, and the Duke of Romagna provided an escort of two hundred cavaliers. The bridal escort had come to Rome by way of Tuscany, but the Pope decided that Lucrezia should travel to Ferrara through the Romagna. He carefully named which towns they should put up in throughout the journey; and each place was required, on pain of his displeasure, to provide everything the company required during their stay.

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On January 6, 1502, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Lucrezia departed from Rome, riding on a beautiful white mule, whose trappings were embroidered with silver and edged with gold fringe. According to his express instructions from Isabella of Mantua, young Ferrante d'Este forwarded particulars of her attire. She wore a tight dress of crimson silk, a loose over-robe of gold brocade with large hanging sleeves and lined with ermine. On her head was a hat of crimson silk trimmed with feathers, and below the hat on the left side hung a pendant of pearls which reached to her ear. Altogether, says the admiring youth, she made a magnificent appearance. Her father went from window to window of the Vatican watching the procession till it vanished from sight, little dreaming that he would never look upon his beloved daughter again.

The journey from Rome to Ferrara occupied nearly a month, because Lucrezia, being of a delicate constitution, and unaccustomed to the saddle, travelled by easy stages and frequently rested on the road. The Pope was so anxious about her that he had made her promise to write to him concerning her health from every city she passed through. According to the Ferrarese ambassadors, his Holiness demanded daily and even hourly reports of her journey, showing unmistakably they thought that he loved her more than any of his children. All the cities through which she passed received her with triumphal arches, decorations, illuminations, and every

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demonstration of honour and esteem. Just before she reached Foligno all the Baglioni came from their various castles to meet her, and invited her to their city of Perugia. But this was not in the programme, and she continued her march towards Urbino. At Gubbio, one of the principal cities of the Montefeltri, she was met by the Duchess Elizabetta, who remained with her all the rest of the way to Ferrara. When she reached Urbino on January 18 Duke Guidobaldo with the whole of his court came out to meet her and conduct her to his beautiful palace, which he had vacated for her convenience, and which, by way of ingratiating himself with the sister of the dreaded Duke of Romagna, he had decorated with the Borgian and French coats-of-arms. From Urbino she passed on to Pesaro, now owned by her brother Cesare, where a hundred children, clad in his colours of black and yellow and carrying olive branches in their hands, came out to greet her, crying, "Duca ! Duca ! Lucrezia ! Lucrezia !" The city officials conducted her to the palace that had once been that of her divorced husband, Giovanni Sforza ; and we need not be surprised to learn that during her stay in that place she joined in none of the festivities, but kept herself in strict seclusion on the pretext of washing her head. From town to town of the Duke of Romagna's dominions she was accompanied by his despotic and cruel lieutenant, Don Ramiro d'Orco ; and at every city gate the magistrates presented her with their keys. After leaving Forli,

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where again she had spent a day in the apparently highly important mystery of "washing her head," a guard of a thousand foot and 150 horsemen was provided, in case the bridal train might be attacked by the bandit Carraro, who, notwithstanding the efforts of Cesare's terrible lieutenant, Don Ramiro, still infested the roads. At Bologna, which had not been seized by the Duke of Romagna solely because of the prohibition of the French King, Giovanni Bentivoglio entertained the sister of his mortal enemy with splendid festivities, and on the following day accompanied her with ostentatious courtesy to the river Po, along which she proposed to finish her journey in order to escape the discomfort of further travelling by land.

On the evening of January 31 Lucrezia reached one of the castles belonging to the Bentivogli family situated about twenty miles from Ferrara. And here a very singular thing happened. Although she had corresponded in very friendly terms with her father-in-law, and had evidently made a highly favourable impression on her young brothers-in-law, her husband had hitherto held aloof, and there had been no personal communication whatever between them. Apparently he had not the slightest interest in the wife who had been forced upon him by the Pope and the King of France. But all of a sudden his curiosity seems to have been aroused; and, disguising himself and four of his friends as common soldiers, he rode off to this castle of the Bentivogli, sent a messenger to Lucrezia to inform her of his arrival, and



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requested an interview with her. Although somewhat startled by his sudden and unexpected appearance, Lucrezia seem to have received her tardy husband very graciously; and after some conversation he and his disguised friends rode back to Ferrara.

Alfonso d'Este was of a reserved and even sullen disposition. He was a capable soldier in the field, and had devoted himself specially to the study of civil and military engineering. So great was his interest in the manufacture of cannon that he had made himself a skilful mechanic, and was in the habit of working in the foundry in company with his men. When little over fifteen years of age he had been married to Anna Sforza, sister to the young Duke of Milan; but in 1497, after six happy years of married life, she had died immediately after the birth of her first child, and the infant had not survived her. Alfonso was now in his twenty-fifth year, fully aware that it was his duty as heir to the dukedom to carry on the succession, but strongly averse to a second wife on account of the tender memories he cherished of the first, and doubly averse to Lucrezia Borgia, because of her dubious reputation and because she was the illegitimate offspring of a priest. Whatever may have been his sentiments, however, previous to this surprise interview in the castle of the Bentivogli, there seems to be no doubt that he immediately succumbed to the peculiar fascination which Lucrezia Borgia exercised over all who came in contact with her. It may be an exaggeration

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to say, as one of her admiring biographers does, that she instantly turned Alfonso's ardent aversion into an equally ardent love, but it is an undoubted fact that she secured his confidence and esteem, and that they lived together in undisturbed harmony for nearly twenty years.

Duke Ercole had made the most splendid and extravagant preparations for Lucrezia's reception. He had induced his daughter, Isabella Gonzaga of Mantua, strongly prejudiced against Lucrezia and ardently hostile as she was to the whole Borgian family, to come to Ferrara to do the honours of the city; and the special guests he had invited numbered, together with their numerous suites, no less than two thousand persons. The Ferrarese nobility placed their palaces at his disposal, but Ercole insisted that none but those whose means were amply adequate should be at any expense for the maintenance of his guests. The French ambassador and his suite of fifty persons were entertained with profuse hospitality throughout the festivities by the Cavaliere Bonifacio Bevilagna. The Venetian ambassadors with their suite, which numbered one hundred and fifty, were lodged with a son-in-law of Sigismondo, the Duke's brother. Count Guaniero, the Grand Steward, took charge of the Florentine ambassadors, whose suite likewise numbered one hundred and fifty. The ambassadors of the bride's brother, the illustrious Duke of Romagna, were lodged in the Schiavanoja Palace, the most splendid in all Ferrara; and the other princely and noble visitors were similarly

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provided for. Duke Ercole, who had engaged a small army of cooks, found his commissariat a matter of no small difficulty. We read that as early as December 22 he had collected 300 oxen and calves, 15,000 head of poultry, about the same quantity of game, 300 large cheeses, and other requisities in similar proportion. But the ladies and gentlemen of the Renaissance had hearty appetites, and he evidently feared lest his guests should be short of veal, for we find him subsequently begging the loan of 100 calves from his illustrious son-in-law of Mantua, under promise to return that number on the first convenient opportunity.

The Duke of Ferrara was a specialist in ceremonial shows, and he had determined that the home-coming of his daughter-in-law should be one of the most brilliant spectacles of that spectacular age. On Tuesday, February 1, the illustrious Isabella Gonzaga, Marchioness of Mantua, with her suite, went up the river in a state barge to a point at which it had been arranged to meet the bride, who was coming down stream in her barge, accompanied by Elizabetta, Duchess of Urbino. Isabella greeted and embraced her sister-in-law with great politeness and demonstrations of apparent affection, although, as she wrote to her husband immediately afterwards, her real sentiments were those of anger and repugnance. Yet she also was destined to fall under the spell of the Borgian magnetism, and from this time forth to the day of her death she remained one of

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Lucrezia's most sympathetic and affectionate friends. Isabella conducted the bride to the Palace of Alberto d'Este, outside the walls, where Lucrezia and her husband were to stay the night, before making their public entry into the city. A lady superintendent with twelve younger ladies, all dressed alike in crimson satin and black velvet, had been appointed to wait upon her; and her father-in-law had sent as a present five gorgeous carriages, covered in velvet, or satin, or gold brocade, and each drawn by four beautiful and handsomely caparisoned horses.

On the following day Lucrezia made her formal entry into Ferrara, every detail of which has been minutely recorded by the chroniclers of the time. We are told of the eighty resplendent trumpeters in white and mulberry-coloured satin and gold brocade, of the seventy-five mounted archers in the Este livery of white and red, of the company of halberdiers in tunics of dark-coloured velvet and cloth of gold and wearing close-fitting pantaloons of which one leg was black and the other flesh-coloured, of the five reverend bishops in long mantles trimmed with fur, of the gentlemen in attendance on the bride including some specially magnificent Spaniards in vests of gold brocade with tabards of black velvet, of the foreign ambassadors, the deputies of the city of Rome, the ladies in open carriages, all resplendently attired in satins and velvets and jewels, and of the clowns and buffoons without which no procession in these days would have been complete.

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The bridegroom, a stern-looking, black-bearded man, was dressed after the French fashion in red velvet. He wore small red boots with black velvet gaiters, and rode a bay horse caparisoned in crimson and gold. The bride, on a splendid white horse, whose trappings were richly ornamented with gold and pearls, rode under a purple baldachin which was supported by eight doctors of the various faculties of the University of Ferrara. It was no doubt the proudest moment of her life, and she had apparelled herself accordingly. Over a camorra of dark satin trimmed with gold lace she wore a loose robe of gold brocade. On her head was a small cap completely covered with gold and pearls, to the value, as Zambotta declares, of 30,000 ducats. Round her neck was a chain composed of alternate diamonds, pearls, and rubies, from the centre of which hung a pearl and a ruby of great size and value. Her beautiful golden hair fell loosely over her shoulders; and as she rode through the crowded streets, the people of Ferrara must have thought that their Prince could never have found a more magnificent or more radiantly beautiful bride. Eighty-six mules had previously entered the city carrying her trousseau and jewellery; so that the good people of Ferrara were also shown that their Prince had brought home a bride exceptionally well dowered. It may not have occurred to them, as the historian Gregorovius severely remarks, that the boxes and bales so ostentatiously displayed represented her rapacious father's plunder from all the cities of Christendom.

## VII

### THE CULMINATION

TOWARDS the end of 1501, and just before Lucrezia's departure for Ferrara, a virulent lampoon against the Pope and his family appeared in the form of a printed letter addressed to Silvio Savelli, one of the dispossessed and exiled Roman barons, who was then living at the Court of the Emperor Maximilian. It purported to have been written by another banished Roman, and was dated from the Spanish camp at Taranto. It would not be fair, of course, to take the *ex parte* statements of this epistle as evidence except where there is some corroboration. But it is an authentic document, which was widely read and widely believed during Alexander's lifetime. The mere fact that it could be believed is significant of much. And after making every allowance for the passion of an injured and revengeful enemy (who was probably one of the Colonna), it must be admitted to cast a lurid light upon the condition to which Rome and the Church had been reduced by the disgraceful conduct of the Borgia.

Silvio, who had been reported to have solicited friends and obtained recommendatory letters to intercede with the Pope for the restoration of his

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estates, is warned of the hopelessness of attempting to deal in that way with such a traitor, who never would or could do justice unless compelled by fear or force. He is a monster, says the writer, whose whole life has been devoted to whoredom and rapine and deceit. It is folly to complain of the Turk when this new Mahomet infinitely surpasses the other. He is anti-Christ, for no greater enemy to our religion is conceivable. He must be publicly exposed. Silvio must inform the Emperor and all the Princes of the Empire of all the abominable crimes of this plague of Christendom. They must be related before the Diet; and printed copies of the charges must be distributed throughout Europe. Some of these charges, which Silvio is enjoined to recite boldly, with an audible voice, in a public assembly of the princes, are then enumerated as follows.

Honours, dignities, marriages, divorces, everything is now vendible by this monstrous head of the Christian Church. Benefices and ecclesiastical dignities, which used to be, and ought to be, conferred on worthy men for the salvation of souls, are now disposed of by open sale. Any one may now go to the Pope's Palace and buy the Christian mysteries with gold. There, like Cerberus at the gate of Hell, stands the Cardinal of Modena, the Pope's minister of iniquity, readily granting admission to the rich and sending the poor empty away. In Rome, and even within the Pope's own apartments, the Tartars are outdone in thieving, the Carthaginians in treachery and

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deceit, Nero and Caligula in riot and cruelty. There Alfonso of Aragon was barbarously murdered and Perotto slain within his master's arms. The number of other persons who have been wounded or murdered and thrown into the Tiber is too great to be enumerated. There is not now a private person in Rome without fears for himself or some of his family. It is impossible to describe without trembling the monstrous lewdness which is openly practised in the Pope's own palace, or the filthiness of his sons and daughters. But the indignant writer does go on to describe what no modern pen, whether trembling or not, can venture to translate.

The Pope has driven the greater part of the Roman nobility into exile and despoiled the ancient Lords of Latium in order to provide wealth and principalities for his incestuous brood of children and grandchildren, some of whom are yet infants in their cradles. A religious war has been proclaimed against the Turk, prayers appointed in all the churches of Rome, pardons and indulgences sold in every foreign city—for what? Solely as a contrivance to raise large sums of money to enable the Pope to support the luxury of his children, and to make war upon ancient free cities and rightful princes.

As to the doings of his son Cesare, everybody knows of the calamities that have fallen upon Imola and Forlì, of the storming of Faenza, of the subjugation of Rimini and Pesaro. To these have now been joined Cesena, Fano, and Bertinoro,



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all severed from the ecclesiastical patrimony in order to create a new dominion wherein this son, the very likeness of his father, may have a wide enough field for plunder. Cesare is at present conspiring against Camerino and Urbino, so that by conquering them he may possess himself of the whole March of Ancona. Spoleto, Civita Vecchia, Isola, Nepi, the Castle of St. Angelo, all the strongest fortresses of the ecclesiastical state, are now garrisoned by his forces; and matters are come to such a pass that every place is governed according to his pleasure. Last year he destroyed and ravaged the cities belonging to the Holy See in the Romagna as if it had been an enemy's country; and afterwards, in the neighbouring and friendly State of Tuscany gave his soldiers leave to plunder for several days so that they filled every place with rapine, rape, and murder. The cardinals are silent. The most powerful of them having been driven away, and most of the others preferring to keep possession of their dignities and wealth by fawning and flattery, none remain who dare whisper against this Duke's doings. They all praise and admire, though they all secretly fear, this fratricide, who once was a cardinal and now is an assassin. By his will and nod everything is controlled; and whomsoever he may desire to get rid of is stabbed or poisoned and thrown into the Tiber. There is a good deal more in the letter than is here summarised; and the writer concludes with an impassioned appeal to the princes of the Empire to come to the rescue of

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their Church, to remove out of the way the vilest Pope that ever lived, and so bring back the barque of St. Peter, now tossing in a tempest, to a safe haven.

Cardinal Ferrari, the "Cerberus" of this scathing composition, ventured to show it to the Pope, who seems to have treated it with contemptuous indifference. Apparently he took no steps to stop the circulation of the pamphlet or to discover its author. Cesare, who was now absolute tyrant of Rome, which was filled with his police and spies, was by no means so tolerant of affronts; and how the author of the "Letter to Silvio Savelli" might have been dealt with had he been in Rome, and unwise enough to sign his name, may be inferred from the following instance or two of Cesare's method of dealing with critics. A masquerader who had been seen to point with his finger at the Duke of Romagna, and heard by a spy to utter some disparaging remark, was immediately seized and thrown into prison, when Cesare ordered the culprit's offending finger to be amputated and his tongue cut out, so that both members, tied together and suspended from the bars of the prison window, might serve as a warning to others to behave more respectfully. Even the Venetian ambassador was powerless to save a fellow citizen who had similarly offended the vindictive Duke. A younger brother of Giovanni Lorenzo, a Venetian of good family and famous for his learning, had written home some strong comments on the extravagant expenditure of the

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Pope and his son. Cesare, hearing of it through his spies, immediately had the poor fellow seized and thrown into prison. As soon as this became known in Venice the Senate sent instructions to their ambassador in Rome to demand Lorenzo's liberation. The Pope expressed great regret for the occurrence, of which he declared he was ignorant, and promised to give immediate orders for the prisoner's release. But when the ambassador called on the following day the Pope informed him, with expressions of profound sorrow, that the young man had already died in prison. On making further inquiries, the ambassador discovered that, the very day before, by Cesare's orders, Lorenzo had been strangled and his body thrown into the Tiber. Alexander explained that he had frequently told his son that Rome was a free city, where everybody should be at liberty to speak and write as he pleased, and reminded him that although evil had often been spoken of himself he had always let it pass. Whereupon the Duke replied that he meant to teach such people repentance.

On February 17, six weeks after Lucrezia's departure for Ferrara, the Pope and the Duke of Romagna, accompanied by six cardinals, paid a visit to Piombino to inspect the fortifications being constructed there under the direction of Leonardo da Vinci. It was evident that Cesare had seized the place as a convenient headquarters for the operations which he contemplated against Tuscany. Alexander usually managed to combine

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business with pleasure ; and we are told that, in spite of its being Lent, the Papal party indulged in prodigal festivity, and that a performance of beautiful dancing girls was given for the special delectation of his Holiness. On the return journey in the early days of March, his galleys were caught in a storm, and once more Rodrigo Borgia was in danger of a watery grave, not far from the spot where one hundred and eighty of his suite were lost on the return from his Spanish legation in 1471. The crew were terrified, the cardinals wept, but Alexander remained calm throughout all the danger, making the sign of the Cross and invoking the protection of the Blessed Virgin whom he believed to be always watching over his safety.

Since the preceding December negotiations had been taking place between the Vatican and Pisa for the formation of an independent state on the coast of Tuscany, of which Cesare was to be the head with the title of Duke of Pisa ; and the present seemed an opportune moment for carrying out the design. The Roman barons had been crushed, Cesare's lieutenant, Don Ramiro, held the Romagna in an iron grip, Venice was fully occupied with the Turks, Germany was unable to interfere, Ferrara was in close alliance ; and the neutrality if not the active aid of France was confidently counted on because Louis XII needed the Pope's assistance in the inevitable quarrel with Spain, which Alexander had foreseen would sooner or later break out over the partition of Naples. Cesare's ultimate aim seems to have been to weld Tuscany

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and the states of the Church (or rather his own states) into one domain, so that a kingly throne of Central Italy, and perhaps even the Papacy itself, might become an hereditary possession of the House of Borgia.

But first it was necessary to complete his sanguinary work in Romagna and the March ; and on June 13, 1502, he left Rome at the head of his army, having kept his plan of campaign a profound secret. Two of his condottiere, Vitellozzo Vitelli with one hundred and twenty men-at-arms and a company of foot soldiers, and Gianpaolo Baglioni with fifty men-at-arms and five hundred infantry, were already actively engaged in furthering Piero de' Medici's operations against Florence, and had occupied the town of Arezzo ; but Cesare's objective was in another direction altogether. Notwithstanding the warning of the " Letter to Silvio Savelli " six months earlier, any suspicions which Duke Guidobaldo of Urbino may have entertained had been artfully lulled to sleep. The Pope had amicably settled a dispute between the Apostolic Chamber and Urbino respecting its fief, and had even proposed a marriage between his niece Angela Borgia and Francesco Maria Rovere, Guidobaldo's heir. Cesare, on his part, had pretended to take Guidobaldo into his confidence, and now, making a feint on Camerino, he induced the Duke to lend him troops and artillery for the purpose, as well as to send a thousand of his foot soldiers to the assistance of Vitelli in Tuscany. Then, as soon as the unsuspecting Guidobaldo had

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thus disarmed himself, Cesare swooped down on the defenceless State of Urbino, pouring in his troops so suddenly and by so many different roads that Guidobaldo and his young heir had scarce time to disguise themselves and take to flight. Having dismantled the ducal palace of its splendid and valuable books and objects of art, which he packed off to his own favourite castle at Cesena, Cesare turned back upon Camerino. After a siege of some days, a truce was declared to consider the terms of a capitulation; but whilst the negotiations were in progress Cesare suddenly ordered the place to be stormed, and the unsuspecting and unprepared defenders easily fell into his hands. Julius Cæsar Varano, the "tyrant" of the place, with two of his sons, were thrown into prison, and subsequently strangled. The news of these successes made the Pope almost beside himself with joy. He read the announcements again and again and caused the Eternal City to be illuminated. Camerino was bestowed on the infant Giovanni Borgia with the title of Duke; and the perfidious conqueror thereof was now proudly designated, "Cesare Borgia of France, by the Grace of God Duke of Romagna, of Valentino, and of Urbino, Prince of Andria, Lord of Piombino, Gonfaloniere and Captain-General of the Holy Roman Church."

It was at this time that Machiavelli first came into personal contact with the successful soldier and diplomatist, whom he afterwards depicted as a model for "tyrants" in his *Principe*. Bishop Soderini

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had been sent to Urbino by the Florentines to confer with the Duke of Romagna, and Machiavelli accompanied the envoy as his secretary. It was a game of bluff on both sides; for although Cesare had no serious intention of furthering the restoration of the Medici, he hoped by threats and pretences to cajole the Florentines into an alliance with him, whilst they, on their part, merely desired to keep him engaged in negotiations until the French could come to their assistance. But Machiavelli had already formed a high estimate of Cesare's powers; and wrote home that no enterprise was so great that it would not seem small to him, that he despised danger and fatigue, that he acted with such secrecy and celerity as to arrive at one place before anybody knew he had left the other, that he had not only got hold of the best soldiers in Italy but had gained their goodwill, and that he was constantly favoured by fortune. When a French contingent arrived before Arezzo and speedily brought the rebels to terms, Cesare promptly threw over Vitellozzo Vitelli and the Orsini, alleging that they were acting on their own account and without any instructions either from him or the Pope. Then, in pursuance of his pre-arranged plan, he prepared to turn his arms against Bologna.

But just at this juncture the disputes over Naples recalled Louis XII to Italy; and as soon as he arrived at Asti, towards the end of July, all the enemies of the House of Borgia, including Cardinal Orsini from Rome, flocked to him with

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their complaints and warnings. They succeeded in arousing the French king's suspicions, and as a consequence the Duke of Romagna was at once forbidden to proceed against Bologna or to make any further aggressive movements against any part of Tuscany. Cesare's counteracting stroke exhibited both his usual subtlety and daring. After a hurried conference with his father in Rome, he rode off in disguise to the French camp at Milan, where he arrived on August 5, and in the midst of the crowd of the enemies of himself and his family, by various promises, including that of Alexander VI's support in the affair of Naples and his own influence to secure the election of Cardinal d'Amboise on the next vacancy of the Papal throne, he induced Louis XII to support him (though at present secretly) in his designs upon Bologna and on the Orsini.

Before this secret agreement was so much as suspected, however, a conspiracy against Cesare was formed amongst the petty tyrants who were his best condottiere. They had become alarmed at his rapidly growing power ; and realising at last that they were all likely to be "devoured by this dragon one after another," they seized the opportunity of his loss of French support to rebel against him. On October 9 they held a meeting at the castle of La Magione in Perugia, where those who were present, including many of the Orsini, several of the Baglioni, Oliverotto of Fermo, and Vitellozzo Vitelli, together with representatives of the Montefeltri and Bentivoglio families, all swore to stand by one

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another and to raise a combined army against the dreaded Borgia. A week later, with a force of 10,000 men, they captured Urbino ; Guidobaldo was reinstated in his dominions amidst the acclamations of his old and devoted subjects ; the sole survivor of the Varani re-occupied Camerino ; the other dispossessed tyrants of the Romagna reappeared to reclaim their stolen possessions ; and in a moment the whole edifice of the Borgian grandeur seemed tottering to its fall.

Cesare, who was at Imola, with no force at his command capable of giving battle to the conspirators' army, which by the addition of Baglioni's troops soon swelled to 12,000 men, clearly realised the gravity of the situation, though he showed no signs of perturbation or dismay. He instantly despatched Don Michelotto and another Spanish captain with all of his army that remained faithful to him, with instructions to harass the enemy and prolong the conflict as long as possible whilst he set about collecting a fresh force. Fortunately for him the Cardinal of Modena had just died (of poison it was said), and the 50,000 ducats of his hoarding which the Pope had promptly seized went a long way towards furnishing a formidable contingent of men-at-arms. But he also sent an urgent request to Louis XII for the aid he had secretly promised ; and at the same time he endeavoured to effect an alliance with Florence. At first the rebels had it all their own way ; the Duke's forces were utterly routed at Fossombrone, and Don Michelotto, who had barely escaped, was

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besieged at Pesaro. But whilst he held out news arrived that the French king had sent a company of five hundred men-at-arms under the command of Charles d'Amboise to the Duke's assistance, and the whole aspect of affairs was suddenly changed. With France at his back the rebels knew well enough, Cesare would be unconquerable.

But instead of facing the dismayed conspirators in the field the wily Duke now had recourse to diplomacy; and both he and the Pope exerted all their craft to break up the league by sowing dissension amongst its members. They managed to detach the Orsini faction, and Paolo Orsini, who was completely deluded and won over by Cesare's dissimulation, persuaded the others to a treaty of peace. According to the terms of this agreement, which was made on October 28, all the condottiere agreed to return to the service of the Duke of Romagna, to aid him in the recovery of Urbino and Camerino as well as in all his other enterprises, not to make war without his leave, and not to hire themselves to anybody else. He, on his part, undertook to pay them as before, and to defend them, all and singular, against any power other than the Pope or the King of France. He made a separate treaty with Giovanni Bentivoglio by which, in return for a solemn undertaking not to attack Bologna, Giovanni agreed to furnish him with a specified contingent of men-at-arms. Guidobaldo of Urbino, finding himself thus treacherously abandoned by his late allies, dismantled some of his fortresses, and on December 8 once more

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betook himself to flight. Young Varano instantly abandoned Camerino and fled back to Venice.

Whilst these negotiations were in progress, Cesare had secretly gone on with his recruiting; but, in order that the number of his forces might not be discovered, had dispersed the men as they arrived into various parts of the Romagna. About the end of November he removed from Imola to Cesena. A few weeks after this the five hundred French lances returned to Lombardy. Nobody knew, and nobody could guess, what these movements meant, reports Machiavelli, who was then at Cesena, as Florentine envoy, "for this Duke never reveals his intentions before carrying them out." A little later Machiavelli reports another mysterious and startling occurrence. Don Ramiro d'Orco, Cesare's trusted lieutenant in the Romagna, came from Pesaro to Cesena, and, to the amazement of everybody, was instantly arrested and thrown into prison. Three days later his dead body, cut into two pieces, with a wooden dagger on one side and a bloody knife on the other, was exposed in the market-place. The cause of this sudden execution was unknown, wrote Machiavelli to his government at the time; but in the seventh chapter of his *Principe* written eleven years afterwards, he mentions this ferocious act as one worthy to be imitated, and states its motive. In order to reduce the Romagna to unanimity and subjection, he says, it was necessary to employ great severity, and Cesare Borgia appointed Don Ramiro, a cruel and passionate man, as fit for this

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purpose. But as soon as Don Ramiro's ferocious conduct had produced its desired effect it was a good stroke of policy on Cesare's part to execute him, so as to make it appear that whatever cruelties had been perpetrated were the unauthorised actions of the agent and abhorred by the Duke himself.

Cesare's apparent inaction at Cesena puzzled everybody, including the Pope, who, as the Venetian ambassador reports, impatiently exclaimed that he could not imagine what the devil the Duke was about, loitering there and spending a thousand ducats a day. But the silent and inscrutable dissembler was only biding his time. He had as yet given no campaigning instructions to his reconciled condottiere, although the Orsini and Vitelli, who, with their troops, were stationed now in the reconquered duchy of Urbino, had dutifully sent messengers to inquire what enterprise they were to undertake next. At last, tired of inaction, they sent Oliverotto da Fermo to suggest either an expedition into Tuscany or the capture of Sinigaglia. Cesare replied that the Florentines must be treated as his friends, but that he approved of their other proposal. From the time of Sixtus IV Sinigaglia had been in possession of that Pope's nephew, Giovanni della Rovere, who had married a sister of Guidobaldo of Urbino. Giovanni had died the previous year, and his heir, Francesco Maria, a boy eleven years old, who was also heir to the duchy of Urbino, was now sheltered in the town, with his

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mother and under the care of his guardian, Andrea Doria. One reason for Cesare's approval of the proposed attack on this place doubtless was the hope that he might obtain possession of this inconvenient heir and get rid of him as he had got rid of young Astorre Manfredi. But on the approach of the troops of Vitelli and the Orsini, Andrea Doria sent the princess and her son to Venice, after which, ordering his lieutenant to defend the citadel to the utmost, he hurried off to Florence. The town was not able to hold out long, but the governor of the citadel defied all the efforts of the condottiere, and declared he would deliver up his keys to nobody but the Duke of Romagna in person. On receiving a message from his captains to this effect, Cesare at once set out for Sinigaglia with a force of 11,000 horse and 10,000 foot, which he had ordered to concentrate in the neighbourhood of Fano, sending word in advance to the condottiere that he wished to confer with them all respecting future operations, but that, as it would be most convenient for the men coming with him to be quartered in the town, he would be obliged if they would dispose of theirs in some of the most convenient neighbouring castles. Everything was done as he desired; and the blindness with which these past-masters in strategy, treachery, and all kinds of deceit fell into so open a snare is not the least extraordinary part of the story.

When his advance guard of two hundred horse arrived at the bridge over the river which stands

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almost over against the gate of Sinigaglia, they did not pass it, but forming up to right and left made room for the infantry, which marched immediately into the town. Vitelli, Paolo Orsini, and the Duke of Gravina then came out on their mules to greet Cesare, who rode at the head of his main body of cavalry. Don Michelotto and several other favourites who could be trusted had received instructions that two of them were to attach themselves to each of these lords and to entertain him and not part from him on any account until he was safely housed in the Duke's apartments. Perceiving at once that Oliverotto da Fermo was missing, Cesare made a quick sign to Don Michelotto, who rode forward into the town to make sure of his man, whilst the Duke saluted his other captains with the winning address and charm of manner which he so well knew how to employ upon occasion. Michelotto found Oliverotto with a body of 1000 foot and 150 horse drawn up under arms in an open suburb just within the gates, and having induced him to dismiss his men to their quarters in case disputes should arise by these being occupied by Cesare's newly arrived men, brought him to pay his duty to the Duke with due formality without the walls. On arriving at the Duke's quarters they all dismounted, attended him ceremoniously to his apartment, and were instantly arrested. Having commanded Oliverotto's men in the town to be disarmed, Cesare despatched half his army to deal similarly with the troops of Vitelli and

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the Orsini, who were quartered some six miles away ; but these men, having heard what had happened to their generals, effected their escape. At ten o'clock that night, Oliverotto da Fermo and Vitellozzo Vitelli were strangled. Oliverotto meanly tried to throw all the blame on Vitellozzo ; the latter scoundrel merely begged that his Holiness the Pope might be supplicated to give him a plenary indulgence for his sins. Paolo Orsini and the Duke of Gravina were kept as prisoners until Cesare was assured that the Pope had been able to seize the Orsini who were in Rome. As soon as he learned that this had been done, on January 18, 1503, they were strangled after the same manner as the others. It was a master-stroke of cunning. After making use of his enemies to reinstate him in his dominions, he had got rid of them all at one blow. And he took care to justify the stratagem he had used by sending envoys to all the powers of Italy alleging (what is likely enough) that he had only anticipated a set of secret conspirators who were merely waiting their opportunity to rise and assassinate him.

Cesare's motions were rapid enough now. On January 1, 1503, the day after the executions at Sinigaglia, his army was on the march towards Siena, whither had escaped Pandolfo Petrucci, whom Cesare considered as the brain of the conspiracy. All the petty tyrants fled at his approach as from the path of a hydra. He placed a garrison in Citta di Castello, which had been abandoned

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by the Vitelli; and placed a regent, on behalf of the Church, in Perugia, which surrendered to him on January 6, after the flight of Gianpaolo Baglioni, but he continued his march without troubling to enter the city. He ravaged the country round Siena, and threatened to attack the city itself unless Pandolfo Petrucci were instantly banished. But on January 28 Pandolfo agreed to depart if given a safe conduct, and Cesare was compelled to be satisfied with this, because France had forbidden him to attack the place, and his father, troubled by an unexpected revolt of the barons, had urgently summoned him to Rome. Notwithstanding the safe conduct, however, he despatched a band of fifty armed men after Pandolfo, with orders to take him dead or alive; and the Siennese tyrant only escaped because the Florentine commissary, ignorant of their business, arrested the pursuers and kept them prisoners until he could receive instructions from headquarters.

Whilst Cesare was thus occupied in the Romagna, the Pope had not failed to play his part in Rome. He had collected money and men and artillery; he had used all his artifice in diplomatic negotiations with France and with the league of conspirators, and he had prudently fortified Civita Castellana as a refuge in case of need. But these grave and weighty matters by no means exhausted the energies of this old libertine, who had all but completed his seventy-first year. He got up festivals and processions and masquerades to amuse



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the people (and himself) and to distract attention from his more serious designs. Burchard solemnly notes down in his diary the highly indecent details of one of these masquerades, which paraded in the Piazza of St. Peter whilst the amused Pope watched it from one of his palace windows. And Giustiniani, the Venetian ambassador, wrote home reporting that Alexander went to the races, attended performances of plays in company with his cardinals, and kept up his customary diversions in the Vatican, where certain fair ladies whom his Holiness favoured often remained the whole night long.

Immediately after Cesare's treaty of reconciliation with his condottiere the Pope had cajoled Cardinal Orsini to Rome; and keener-sighted courtiers shrugged their shoulders when they saw the deluded Prelate feasting and gambling and taking part in all the other amusements of the Vatican in blissful unconsciousness of the net in which he had entangled himself. On January 3, 1503, Alexander, having received private intelligence of what Cesare had done at Sinigaglia, sent a message to Cardinal Orsini informing him of the fall of that town and requesting his presence to confer on the subject. The unsuspecting victim hastened to the Vatican to tender his congratulations, and was met on the way and accompanied as though by accident by the governor of the city and an escort of soldiers. As soon as he had entered the Sala del Papagallo, Orsini was surrounded by armed men and conducted to the

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Torre Borgia, whence, after a short time, he was transferred to the Castle of St. Angelo. Alexander instantly seized the cardinal's palace, confiscated all his treasure, and turned his mother, an old woman eighty years of age, into the street. In vain some of the cardinals interceded for their colleague. Alexander declared him to be a traitor, whose complicity in the plot against the Duke of Romagna could not be allowed to go unpunished. Rinaldo Orsini, Archbishop of Florence, and the prothonotary Orsini, together with several relatives and adherents of the family, were arrested and imprisoned at the same time. So many other arrests quickly followed that whoever had any money thought it might be his turn next, and the number who, in consequence, fled from the city was so great that in order to stop the panic Alexander was obliged to summon the Conservators and assure them that as all the guilty ones had now been secured there was nothing to prevent everybody else enjoying the carnival.

At first Cardinal Orsini was allowed to lodge with the Governor of St. Angelo and to have his food sent in by his mother, but as this arrangement was very soon countermanded, the anxious old lady endeavoured to regain this favour for her son by sending to the Pope a large and valuable pearl that he was known to covet. Alexander accepted the jewel, but made no difference in the treatment of his prisoner. On February 23 the cardinal died, and so general was the suspicion of poisoning that next day the Pope's physicians

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were called upon to give their assurance that Orsini had died a natural death. The poisoning is not conclusively proved, although, of course, this piece of evidence to the contrary is obviously of little value. It was remembered that, next to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, Cardinal Orsini had been most instrumental in raising Rodrigo Borgia to the Papal throne. The one was now dead, the other languishing in a French prison, and all the worldly goods of both were in the possession of the Borgia.

Immediately after the Cardinal's arrest the Pope had sent his son Giuffré to take possession of Monte Rotundo and other Orsini strongholds. This determined the remainder of the family to make a final effort to preserve themselves from utter destruction. Combining with the Savelli and some of the Colonna they intrenched themselves in Ceri and the impregnable fortress of Bracciano. Mutio Colonna and Silvio Savelli seized upon Palombara ; and on January 23 the united barons attacked the Ponte Nomentano. They were driven back, but Alexander was so alarmed that he barricaded the Vatican and recalled Giuffré to the city. On February 20 he advised his cardinals to fortify their palaces also, as there was reason to fear another attack of the Orsini, and he sent urgent messages to Cesare begging him to come without any further delay. The terrible Duke was already on the march, devastating the country and committing all sorts of atrocities as he came along. Acquapendente, Montefiascone, and Viterbo

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suffered severely at his hands ; and at San Quirico, whence all the inhabitants had fled except two old men and nine old women, he is reported to have had these miserable creatures strung up over a slow fire in order to make them reveal where the absconding people had hid their treasures ; which, as they did not know, they could not tell, and were accordingly left to be slowly roasted to death. On February 26, accompanied only by a few servants and masked, Cesare entered Rome, and was recognised that evening at the representation of a comedy in the Vatican.

On his way to Rome Cesare had captured all the Orsini fortresses except Ceri and Bracciano, which he would not attack because they were under the express protection of France. But the Pope was not to be deterred by this from completing his destruction of the family, and he now went through the farce of issuing a Brief threatening the apparently reluctant Cesare with excommunication unless he proceeded against these strongholds also. At the same time he made cunning proposals to Giovanni Giordano Orsini to exchange these places for the principality of Squillace or for some territory in the March of Ancona. On April 4 Orsini concluded an armistice and appealed to the mediation of the King of France. But affairs in Naples were going badly for Louis XII. In April the Spaniards obtained a brilliant victory over his forces in Apulia, and on May 16 Gonsalvo de Cordova entered the Neapolitan capital in triumph. The Pope ac-

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cordingly showed a leaning towards Spain, and Cesare was in a much better position for extorting concessions from Louis XII in return for the promise of his assistance. But the French reverses in Naples promised to be of even greater advantage than this to Cesare, and indeed opened an entirely new prospect before him. Without French support he could never have attained to his present pitch of greatness and power. Yet the jealousy of Louis XII had been the only effective check upon his designs against Tuscany and his secret ambition of founding a Borgian kingdom of Central Italy. Consequently, he began to look about for new allies in order to render himself independent of the French king.

The most pressing need was money, and both the Pope and his son set about getting it by every means in their power. As early as March the Venetian ambassador had reported the creation of eighty new offices in the Curia, which were sold at 670 ducats apiece, adding, "if your Highness will cast up the sum you will see how much money the Pope has secured." In May nine new cardinals were created, five of whom were Spaniards, including two relations of the Borgia. Most of them, reports the Venetian ambassador, were men of doubtful reputation, and all of them had paid handsomely for their elevation, so that by this means a further 120 to 130 thousand ducats were got together. But this was not sufficient and other expedients were resorted to. On the night of April 10 Cardinal Giovanni Michiel, nephew

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of Paul II, died after two days of violent vomiting, and even Pastor, who acquits Cesare of many of the crimes charged against him by his contemporaries, is constrained to admit that he poisoned this cardinal in order to obtain the money he wanted so badly. Before dawn next day Michiel's palace was stripped by order of the Pope, and, according to Giustiniani, property worth 150,000 ducats was removed to the Vatican. On June 8 the corpse of Giacomo Santa Croce, who had paid 20,000 ducats for his life at the time of the arrest of Cardinal Orsini six months previously, was exposed headless on the bridge of St. Angelo, and all his possessions went to swell the war-chest of the rapacious Borgia. Don Michelotto went about the city with a band of armed men, forcing his way into houses where it was expected money might be found, arresting the occupants on the pretext that they were Jews or Marani, and then selling the prisoners their lives for as large a ransom as could be raised. A week or two before this, the Pope's favourite secretary, Troccio, had fled from the Vatican. It was said that in revenge for having been omitted from the last batch of cardinals he had revealed the secret negotiations going on between the Vatican and Spain. He was captured on board a vessel bound for Corsica, and, having been brought back to Rome, was strangled by Michelotto in the presence of Duke Cesare. There were other reasons than money for this murder, but of course all his effects went to the Pope. On August 1 Giovanni Borgia, cardinal

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of Moureale, died suddenly, and it was generally thought that Cesare had poisoned him. However that may be, his death brought the Pope another 100,000 ducats at a very convenient time, and Giustiniani reports that his Holiness wore a very cheerful aspect notwithstanding that Moureale was his own nephew.

Cesare Borgia, who was looked upon as a man of almost superhuman sagacity as well as a prime favourite of fortune, had now, whilst yet under thirty years of age, raised himself by crime and treachery and subtle diplomacy and unparalleled audacity to a high position amongst contemporary potentates. At the head of a considerable and successful army, and backed by all the wealth and influence of the Holy See, he was undoubtedly the most formidable power in Italy. Nor did anybody know how much further his vaulting ambition might not carry him. His father, who was in robust health and bade fair to rule in the Vatican for several years to come, had been successful in all his undertakings. He had subdued the city of Rome, annihilated the factious barons who had kept preceding Popes in awe, wrested all the various towns of the Papal States from their petty tyrants, reduced the College of Cardinals to a subservient assembly for the registration of his decrees, and had at last himself become little more than a willing instrument for carrying out the more imperious decrees of his terrible son.

At the moment the Pope and his son were obliged to play a waiting game, for they had

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many different schemes in hand, any one of which might have to be settled upon to the exclusion of the others according to the turn of events ; and accordingly their diplomacy was more than usually shifty, and appeared to many unaccountably vacillating. Alexander would have bestowed upon Cesare the title of King of Romagna and the March were it not that the King of France, whose large army was just about to march through Tuscany and the Papal States to continue his struggle with Spain in Naples, would inevitably have opposed this, seeing that a Borgian monarchy, with Rome as its centre, and all Christendom liable to be covertly laid under contribution for its finances, would have been altogether too formidable an ally. It was perhaps on this account that Louis XII tentatively suggested that he might cede the whole of Naples to the Pope as a monarchy for Cesare in exchange for Bologna and the Romagna. This was not altogether to Alexander's liking, although, in negotiating for something else with the Emperor Maximilian, he said that, in default of other satisfactory arrangements, he would be obliged to accept the offer. What he proposed to France as an alternative was that provided either Naples or Sicily were given to Cesare he would support Louis with men and money against Spain, and also allow him to take whatever he liked in Northern Italy. At the same time, in case the French forces should have no better fortune than before, he made overtures to the Spanish king likewise, who, in return for the

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Pope's support against France was ready to leave him a free hand in Tuscany. And in furtherance of this last-named plan he used every effort to obtain Cesare's investiture of Pisa, Siena, and Lucca from the Emperor. In apparent contradiction to the whole of this, however, he made passionate proposals to Venice to join with him for the love of God in a league against both France and Spain in order to deliver their common country from foreigners. But while the Pope and his son seemed thus, in one way or another, to be on the very point of attaining the highest object of their ambition, a sudden and unprovided for event destroyed the whole web of the Borgian diplomacy. On Saturday, August 12, both the Pope and the Duke of Romagna fell ill of the same complaint. Cesare's youth and strength of constitution enabled him to survive, although, owing to another disease from which he was already suffering, he remained for some weeks in a state of great prostration. But on the 18th, after confessing and receiving the Holy Communion, the Pope expired.

## VIII

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THE suspicious circumstance of the Pope and his son having been seized with a sudden and violent sickness soon after a supper in the vineyard of Cardinal Adriano of Corneto, and of their host having been attacked with the same malady at the same time, gave rise to a dramatic story of poisoning, which was credited by the contemporary historians Guicciardini, Bembo, Giovio, Metarazzo, Sanuto, and Volterranus amongst others, and which remained unquestioned until shown to be untenable by the more discriminating historians of a later time. There are several, not altogether accordant, versions of the story, of which the best-known is that of Guicciardini. After remarking that everybody knew it to be the usual practice both of the Pope and his son to poison not only those they resolved to sacrifice to their revenge or jealousy but also any person of great wealth, whether cardinal or courtier, whose riches tempted their avarice, this historian relates that Cesare had decided to poison the Cardinal of Corneto, and for that purpose had sent up some flasks of envenomed wine to Corneto's vineyard, where he and his father had invited themselves to supper.

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The wine was entrusted to a servant who knew nothing of his master's purpose, and who was told not to open the flasks for anybody without special instructions to do so. But the Pope happening to arrive before the time for supper, and being very thirsty on account of the great heat, at once asked for something to drink. The servant, imagining the poisoned wine to have been reserved because it was particularly choice, brought some of it to his Holiness. The Duke arrived whilst his father was drinking, and being thirsty himself, also took a copious draught of the deadly potion; and both of them were soon carried back to the Vatican in a critical condition. Marino Sanuto's version is different, and more minutely circumstantial. He says that the Cardinal of Corneto, having received a message one morning that the Pope and the Duke of Romagna intended to visit him that evening and bring their supper with them, was terrified at the intelligence, because he suspected at once that they meant to poison him in order to obtain possession of his great wealth. The frightened cardinal sent an urgent private message to the Pope's chief carver to come to his palace as soon as possible, and on the man's arrival placed ten golden ducats in his hand as a preliminary fee, and promised a more substantial reward if the fellow would save his life by revealing the method of poisoning which was to be employed against him. The carver was won over, and he told the cardinal that after supper three boxes of confectionery were to be placed on the table, one

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before the Pope, one before the Duke, and a third, which had been poisoned, before his eminence. Corneto then boldly proposed that the carver should change the boxes and place the poisoned one before the Pope so that he might eat of it and die. At first the man was horrified by such a suggestion, but eventually he was induced to agree by a bribe of 10,000 ducats in gold. Finally, however, a different procedure was adopted, either because even so heavy a bribe could not screw the carver's courage up to the pitch of slaying the Vicar of Christ with his own hands, or because the cardinal was desirous of making assurance doubly sure. When the Pope and the Duke arrived, Corneto threw himself on his knees, and protesting that it was not respectful for a servant to sit at the same table as his lord, begged as a favour that he might be allowed to wait upon his Holiness. The request being granted and the supper over, Cardinal Adriano brought forward the boxes of sweetmeats, and having carefully placed the one containing the poison before the Pope, ate without apprehension from that which was allotted to himself. "Next morning," says Sanuto, spoiling a fine circumstantial fiction with a glaring and easily detected inaccuracy, "the Pope died."

It is true that the Pope and his son did have supper in Cardinal Adriano's vineyard on the evening of August 5, and that both of them, as well as their host, were seized with sudden and dangerous illness not very long afterwards. But the fact that the malady did not show itself until

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after the expiration of seven days, and that when it did appear the symptoms were those of the well-known "tertian" then unusually prevalent in Rome, would be enough to dispose of the foregoing ingenious fiction even if there were no other evidence to the contrary. And there is other evidence; for the despatches of the Venetian and other ambassadors, who sent off bulletins to their several governments every day, from the 12th to the 18th of the month, reporting the progress of the Pope's illness, make it abundantly clear that he was suffering from the malaria which was then exceptionally severe in Rome, and had attacked almost the whole court, owing in great measure, as they declared, to the bad air of the Papal palace. The origin of the story may have been partly due to the fact that Alexander's corpse was so hideously disfigured by rapid decomposition as almost to have lost the semblance of humanity within twenty-four hours. The face was black, the swollen tongue protruded from the gaping mouth, and the body had become almost as broad as it was long—symptoms at that time thought to be sure marks of poison. The persistency of the story, in spite of the explicit evidence of Giustiniani, Soderini and Burchard to the contrary, may perhaps be accounted for by a natural wish to believe that this detested Pope, who was credited with having cleared so many people out of his way by a dose of poison, had at last met with poetical justice and been hoist with his own petard.

The Borgia apologists' contention that the life

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of Alexander VI was no worse and no more shocking to his contemporaries than that of other Popes and Princes of his era is confuted, amongst other ways, by the legends which instantly grew up about his death. Not only was the poisoning generally believed, but people went about whispering that this had been contrived by the Devil, who had carried off the wicked Pope's soul in the form of an ape. The Marquis of Mantua, who was at the head-quarters of the French army a few miles from Rome at the time, wrote home to his wife on September 22 saying that, during his illness the Pope had talked in such a way as to lead his attendants to suppose he was delirious, calling out, "I will come; it is but right; wait yet a little while." But those who were in the secret knew that during the conclave following the death of Innocent VIII, Rodrigo Borgia had purchased the Papacy from the Devil at the price of his soul. According to this agreement, he was to occupy St. Peter's chair for twelve years—which he did, says the Marquis, with the addition of four days. And some people say that seven devils were seen in his chamber at the moment when he gave up the ghost. It was with difficulty that anybody could be persuaded to dress his corpse, and next morning strangers had to be hired to remove it to St. Peter's. Then, says Guicciardini, the whole of Rome ran with indescribable gladness to feast their eyes on the carcass of the dead serpent, whose unbounded ambition, vile treachery, horrid cruelty, insatiable avarice, and monstrous lust had filled the world

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with venom. After twenty-four hours the hideous and corrupt corpse was dragged by a rope, because nobody would touch it, from its bed to the chapel *de febribus*. It had then swelled too large for the coffin that had been made for it, and the undertaker's men, covering it with a cloth, battered it in by main force, brutally jesting the while. The Marquis Gonzaga wrote to his wife that the Pope's funeral was more wretched than that of any Mantuan beggar. No monument was erected over his burial-place, and the sarcophagus now shown as his in the crypt of the Vatican is believed to be that of his uncle Calixtus III.

Alexander VI, according to the judgment of his contemporaries, was a monster of iniquity, the worst Pope who had ever sat in St. Peter's chair. Guicciardini charges him with being impure to an unexampled degree, destitute of religious faith, without probity, barbarously cruel to his foes, meanly ungrateful to the friends by whose aid he had risen to power, false to all, and without a particle of shame; with being animated by insatiable avarice, immoderate lust of dominion, and an ardent desire to exalt at any cost a number of children who were as bad as himself. But he was also endowed with extraordinary acuteness and sagacity, with a wonderful capacity for suggesting subtle expedients in council, and with a surprising dexterity and energy in the carrying out of his projects. Although his aims were always high, his attainments never fell short of his expectations; and his sins met with no due punishment in this

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world, for, from early youth to the day of his death, his career was one continuous course of prosperity. As to Alexander's political character, the testimony of Machiavelli is to much the same effect, although expressed without Guicciardini's indignation and moral disapprobation. In the eighteenth chapter of his celebrated *Principe* he quotes this Pope as a striking example of his contention that it is of the utmost importance for a prince to be able to disguise his sentiments and intentions, and not to keep his word when it would be to his prejudice so to do, since "he who best acts the fox will achieve the greatest success." Alexander VI, he calmly declares with implicit admiration, never dealt with anybody without cheating; no man ever promised things more explicitly or confirmed his promises with stronger oaths; and no man ever observed his promises less; yet, because he understood the world and knew how to play the hypocrite well, his policy never miscarried.

The judgment of some modern historians has been more favourable. In 1805 Roscoe not only defended Lucrezia Borgia but ventured to put in a good word for her father as well; although, indeed, he did not go very far, contenting himself with the declaration that Alexander's crimes had been exaggerated, and that he was endowed with a number of good qualities which ought not to be passed over in silence. Domenico Cerri's *Borgia ossia Alessandro VI Papa e suoi contemporanei*, in 1858, and the Abbé Ollivier's *Le Pape Alexandre VI*

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*et les Borgia*, in 1870, as well as certain more recent fantastic and futile attempts to represent Rodrigo Borgia as a pattern of virtue deserving our reverent admiration, are not worth serious notice. But it is rather astonishing to find so much leniency towards Alexander displayed by Mandell Creighton, whose "History of the Papacy" is a monument of historical accuracy, and in the main of judicious and impartial judgment. Whilst absolving him from some of the vilest of the crimes that have been laid to his charge, Creighton lays great stress upon the facts that Alexander was not forgetful of the formal duties of his office ; that he did but carry on the secularisation of the Papacy which had been begun by Sixtus IV ; that he was the only man in Italy who seemed to know what he wanted ; that there was little moral sense in Europe at that time to be shocked by either his public or his private life ; that political perfidy was universal in Italy in his time ; and he comes finally to the strange conclusion that the exceptional infamy attaching to Alexander's name is due to his want of hypocrisy. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic historian Pastor candidly acknowledges the impossibility of rehabilitating Alexander VI. Although modern critical research has rejected some of the worst accusations made against this Pope, he says, so much has been clearly proved, and it is so useless to attempt to deny his immoralities, both before and after his elevation to the Papal throne, that the modern attempts at "whitewashing" him are "unworthy tampering with the truth." The other

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most eminent modern historians who have devoted special attention to the Borgia are the German, Gregorovius, and the Italian, Villari. Both arrive at a verdict which differs little from that of Guicciardini.

There is no doubt that Alexander VI was a past-master in cunning diplomacy ; but he had neither the political aims nor the political genius of a Sixtus IV or a Julius II. His ruling passion, and the one motive of his whole policy, was love of his children ; for the sake of whose aggrandisement he committed crime after crime, without scruple and without remorse. He desired to leave the whole of the ecclesiastical states as an hereditary possession in his family ; and in the pursuit of this object he compassed the ruin and death of most of the Roman nobles and feudatory princes. He subjected Italy to one desolating invasion after another, and ultimately surrendered it to foreigners, with the sole object of providing for his bastards in the consequent confusion. Roscoe alleged that whatever Alexander's other demerits may have been, at least he governed wisely and for the benefit of the common people in the Eternal City. But even this cannot be allowed him. Rafael Volterranus, a reliable contemporary, declares that justice was extinct in Rome under Alexander ; that no street was safe at night on account of robbers ; that the place swarmed with spies and informers ; and that the slightest expression of dissatisfaction with the Borgian rule was punished with death. Similarly, Cardinal Egidio of Viterbo, another con-

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temporary, testifies that to own money or valuable property in Rome during Alexander's reign was equivalent to being guilty of high treason.

The Borgian apologists have laid great stress upon Alexander's orthodox belief and careful observance of all the rites and ceremonies of his office. He greatly revered the Blessed Virgin, we are told, under whose special protection he believed himself to be. It is to him we are indebted for the daily ringing of the Angelus. By inventing the *Index Expurgatorius*, we are assured, he exhibited his zeal for pure and uncorrupt doctrine; and by enjoining Spain to send missionaries to the newly discovered America he showed his anxiety for the diffusion of the Christian faith throughout the world. Wherefore, they argue, the crimes and misdemeanours charged against him must be gross exaggerations. On the other hand, some adverse critics, finding his sensuality and cruelty and criminality proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, and unable to reconcile these villanies with any real consciousness of the existence of a Divine being, have come to the conclusion that Alexander VI must have been secretly an atheist. It is undoubtedly a somewhat startling contrast to find Alexander turning from the contriving of a murder to the celebration of a Mass; to see him at one moment absorbed in adoration of the Blessed Virgin, and at another instructing a painter to adorn his walls by depicting the Queen of Heaven with the features of his adulterous concubine Giulia Farnese. But his is by no means the only case in

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which fervent piety and ardent immorality have been alternating states of the same mind. The real crux of the matter is that this man was Pope. To separate the office from the man is an impossibility ; and the occupation of the Papal chair by a Rodrigo Borgia reduces the Vicarship of Christ and Vice-Regency of God upon earth to a palpable absurdity.

The sudden illness and unexpected death of Alexander VI threw the whole country into commotion. Louis XII of France and Ferdinand of Spain were determined to strain every nerve to secure the election of their respective candidates for the Papal chair. The French army, under Francesco Gonzaga, had halted close by at Viterbo ; the Spanish army, under Gonsalvo de Cordova, was advancing from the south ; the streets of Rome rang with cries of " Orsini ! " " Colonna ! " " Borgia ! " and it seemed as though the contest for the Papacy could never be settled without an appeal to arms. Although whilst his father was dying Cesare himself was still so ill that his own life was not out of danger, he had ordered his troops from Pesaro to Rome ; and before the death of Alexander could be announced had possessed himself of all the treasure he could lay hands upon. His trusty henchman, Don Michelotto, entering the Papal apartments, held a dagger to the throat of Cardinal Cassanova and threatened to kill him on the spot unless he instantly gave up the Pope's keys and money. By this means the Duke obtained 10,000 golden ducats in cash besides plate and

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jewels to the value of 300,000 ducats more. He was in command of an army of over 8000 men, his cavalry encamped on Monte Mario, his infantry holding S. Onofrio and all the streets leading to the Borgo; eight of the Spanish cardinals were reported to be as subservient to him as though they were his own domestic chaplains; and it was generally believed that he could control the election and secure the elevation of a Pope devoted to his interests.

Machiavelli enumerates four principal lines of policy by which Cesare had carefully provided against the dangers that might befall him on his father's death. The first was to destroy the whole line of those families he dispossessed, in order that, in the event of the next Pope being unfavourable to him, there might be no legitimate heirs to claim restitution. The second was to cajole the nobility of Rome and take many of their adherents into his pay, so that his party in the city could put considerable restraint upon a new and adverse Pope. The third was to pack the Sacred College with friends and creatures of his own. And the fourth was to make himself so strong before the death of his father as to be able single-handed to give a good account of all his enemies. The first three he had carried out with some degree of completeness; and he was in a fair way towards the accomplishment of the fourth when his father died. He told me himself afterwards, says Machiavelli, that he had considered all the accidents that might befall him on the death of his father, and

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had provided against them all, save only this one. It had never entered his thoughts that he might be laid up with a disabling disease at this critical conjuncture. Such was the Duke's prudence and "magnanimity," continues this cynical political philosopher, and so solid were the foundations he had laid during the last few years, that had he not been confronted by the two great armies of France and Spain whilst suffering from a fierce distemper, he would doubtless have overcome all his difficulties and carried his pre-arranged plans into execution. As it was, however, he was obliged to do not what he would but what he could.

Alexander's death, of course, was the signal for an uprising of all the enemies of the House of Borgia; and the haughty Duke, whose frown but a few days previously had caused everybody to tremble, was reduced to seek safety by humiliating alliances. He had endeavoured to obtain possession of the now impregnable Castle of St. Angelo, but the Bishop of Nicastro, who was governor, had refused admittance to Cesare's troops under Don Michelotto; and having failed in securing himself by this means, the Duke, on August 22, submissively swore obedience to the Sacred College, and was permitted to retain his office of Gonfaloniere during the interregnum. But he guarded all the approaches to Rome, both by sea and land, in order to prevent the Cardinals of Vincola and San Giorgio from attending the conclave. Fabio Orsini, who thirsted after Cesare's blood, entered the city with a following of 400 horse and 500 foot,

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burnt houses and shops in the Spanish quarter, came into conflict with some of the Duke's soldiery and washed his hands and face in the blood of a slaughtered Borgia. The Colonna also took up arms; and Cesare, fearing a confederacy of these two powerful families against him, judged it prudent to conclude an alliance with the latter. Several of the Orsini had been deprived by him both of property and life; but the Colonna he had injured in their estates only, which he could, and now did, restore. It was still thought that his influence would be decisive in the election of the next Pope; and both France and Spain courted him assiduously and made large offers for his support of their respective candidates. But the cardinals would not enter the conclave whilst the streets were filled with tumultuous soldiery and whilst there was any fear of interference by the French army at Viterbo, which had refused to pass the Tiber until a new Pope had been elected. Negotiations were carried on with Cesare as with an independent prince. He was still Duke of Romagna, in command of a considerable army, and possessed plenty of money. When the ambassadors of France, Spain, Venice, and the Emperor called on him on August 25 to request his removal from the Vatican in order to secure freedom of election, they found him lying on his couch, but fully dressed, and surrounded by the Spanish cardinals. He declined to leave, on the ground that being ill he was not safe elsewhere; but he expressed his willingness to go into the Castle of

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St. Angelo on condition that it were garrisoned by his own troops. This, of course, was out of the question, for established there he would have overawed the Vatican and all Rome. After the negotiations had lasted about a week, it was at length agreed that Cesare should withdraw with his troops from Rome on consideration that the College of Cardinals granted him a free passage through the States of the Church, engaged to protect him against all attacks, and promised to warn off the Venetians from any attempts against the Romagna. It was agreed at the same time that the Orsini and Colonna should withdraw also; and the ambassadors of France, Spain, Venice, and the Emperor pledged their respective governments to prevent any of these troops, or the French or Spanish army, from approaching within ten miles of Rome so long as the Papal throne remained vacant.

Cesare left Rome on September 2, preserving as much of his accustomed state and dignity as the suddenness and rapidity of his retreat admitted. Preceded by his advance-guard, thirteen carts carrying his artillery and ammunition, and more than a hundred baggage waggons with his other effects, passed through the Transtevere. The Duke followed, escorted by his cavalry, and carried by twelve halberdiers on a high litter with a crimson canopy. Behind him, led by a young page, came his charger, caparisoned in black velvet on which his arms and ducal crown were embroidered in gold. The French, Spanish and Imperial ambassadors accompanied him as far as the city walls.



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At the Porta Viridaria, Cardinal Cesarini desired to make some communication, but received the haughty reply that it was impossible for the Duke to grant him an audience. Amongst his train were his mother, Vanozza, who had been the object of hostile demonstrations, and also his brother, Giuffré, Prince of Squillace. Donna Sancia, who had been shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo by the Pope some time before his death on account of her licentiousness and the dissensions she had created in the family, was released from her confinement and placed in charge of Prospero Colonna to be conducted to Naples.

The Duke proceeded to Nepi, when it soon became known that he had thrown in his lot with France against Spain, and that Louis XII had engaged in return to protect him in his present possessions and to assist him to recover those which he had lost. For the extensive dominion which he had built up at the cost of so much bloodshed and treachery had already begun to crumble away. The Orsini and other surviving Roman barons had repossessed themselves of their old estates; Guidobaldo had been received back with open arms at Urbino; Giovanni Sforza had re-entered Pesaro amidst the acclamations of his old subjects; the Vitelli returned to Citta di Castello, Appiano to Piombino, Varani to Camerino, Della Rovere to Sinigaglia; and, after one repulse, Gianpaolo Baglioni had succeeded in recapturing Perugia. The Romagna alone remained. Cesare Borgia has been generally commended for his good

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government of this province, which, it is said, won for him the affection of the inhabitants. There was little affection in the case, but Cesare had certainly to some extent served their interests. After allowing his ferocious agent, Don Ramiro, to stamp out all opposition, and then killing him by way of disavowing his methods, Cesare had shown the Romagnoles that it was more to their interest to have one than many masters. By suppressing the brigandage to which they had all been exposed, by employing many of them with good pay under his banners, and by appointing some of them to comfortable benefices and other posts of profit, which his command of all the wealth and influence of the Papacy easily enabled him to do, he had taught them that it was better to be subject all together to one potent and wealthy lord rather than for each city to be under the dominion of its own petty prince, who was always at feud with his neighbours, and who could neither defend them against their enemies for want of power nor help them otherwise for want of money.

As soon as Cesare Borgia had departed, Cardinal Giuliano Rovere, who had been an exile for ten years, entered Rome, and at once boldly announced that he had not come in the French interest but in his own. He was soon followed by Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who had been released from his Bourges prison in the hope that he would use his influence in favour of the French cardinal d'Amboise. But Sforza no sooner reached Rome, where his reception was an enthusiastic one, than

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he set about working hard for his own election. When at Milan in the previous August, in order to obtain the aid of Louis XII in extricating him from his difficulties, Cesare had promised to support the candidature of Cardinal d'Amboise at the next Papal election; and the French now counted upon him to influence in their favour the votes of the Spanish cardinals. But although these cardinals dared not vote for one of their own nationality in face of the outbreak of popular rage against everything Spanish which had instantly followed the death of Alexander VI, they were not disposed to incur the anger of their king by voting for a French Pope whilst that country was at war with Spain. D'Amboise had come to Rome confident of his own election; but when he found that to be hopeless he set himself to prevent at any rate that of his principal rival, Giuliano della Rovere. As no party was in a position to carry the election, and as the disorderly state of affairs permitted of no further delay, a compromise was soon agreed upon. On September 22 a man of unblemished character, but aged and infirm, and therefore not likely to rule long, was elected in the person of Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena, who assumed the name of Pius III in memory of the uncle who had raised him to the purple.

Pius III had no great partiality for Cesare Borgia; but when the Duke entreated to be allowed to return to Rome, and the Spanish cardinals, who interceded for him, assured the Pope he was very ill and only wanted to come to

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Rome to die, he gave his permission ; and on October 3 Cesare returned, accompanied by his mother and his brother Guiffré, and bringing with him 250 horse and 500 infantry. The fact really was that the departure of the French army for Naples had left Cesare unprotected, and he feared a combined attack of the Orsini, Savelli, and other enemies at Nepi. He also wanted an opportunity to win the Pope over to his side. Pius was not unfriendly ; and when the Baglioni and Orsini attacked some places in Umbria, he issued a Brief to Perugia forbidding any one to act against his “ beloved son Cesare Borgia of France, Duke of Romagna and Valentinois, and Gonfaloniere of the Church.” He also sent similar Briefs to the Romagna, where the Venetians had taken possession of several cities. But in the course of a few days Bartolomeo d’Alviano, Gianpaolo Baglioni, and the Orsini who were in the city, backed by the Cardinals della Rovere and Riario, demanded the disbandment of Cesare’s army. All the Orsini, with the exception of Giovanni Giordano, entered into the service of the King of Spain because Cesare Borgia was on the side of France ; and on October 12 it was announced that they had also made an alliance with their hereditary enemies the Colonna.

This union of enemies, which had been brought about by Bartolomeo d’Alviano and the Venetian ambassador, terrified Cesare, who immediately endeavoured to remove from Rome to the fortress of Bracciano, whither Giovanni Giordano, who

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alone of his family had entered the service of France, engaged to conduct him in safety. This so angered the rest of the family that they talked of throwing Giovanni Giordano into prison, and his own wife urged them to do so. But Bartolomeo d'Alviano had set a guard at every gate, whilst Baglioni and the other Orsini attacked the Duke's men with such fury that he was constrained to return and take refuge in the Vatican. His troops, which were already greatly reduced in number in consequence of Gonsalvo de Cordova having recalled every Spaniard to the aid of his country on pain of death, all deserted or were dispersed; and when the Orsini demanded his arrest from the Pope and found Pius III lying on his death-bed too ill to attend to their request, they endeavoured to take the law into their own hands. The Duke was at the end of his resources, and took refuge, with a few servants, in the Castle of St. Angelo.

But on October 18, after a Pontificate of only twenty-six days, Pius III died, and the situation of affairs was again suddenly changed. Sixteen days later, on November 1, after the shortest sitting of any conclave in the whole history of the Papacy, it was announced that Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere had been elected Pope, and that it pleased him to take the title of Julius II. All the world seems to have been greatly surprised at the quickness and unanimity of Julius' election; for although he was a cardinal of long standing, of great power and interest and magnificence, a staunch defender of the dignity and privileges of

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the Church, and acknowledged even by his bitterest enemy, Alexander VI, to be a man of veracity, he was also universally known to be of a restless and intriguing disposition, with a turbulent and terrible temper, which had frequently caused offence and created him many enemies. But the truth is these considerations had been of little weight on the one side or the other, for the result had been arranged beforehand by intrigues and promises and bribes of every description. It is not necessary to enter into any detail of the bribes given to the different electors further than to say that the votes of the solid body of Spanish cardinals, who, as the Ferrarese ambassador slyly remarked, did not intend to be poor when they came out of the conclave, were obtained through the influence of Cesare Borgia; and that when Cardinal Giuliano bargained with the Duke and these cardinals for their votes, on October 29, in the Vatican, he promised in return to confirm Cesare's appointment as Gonfaloniere of the Church, to give his nephew, Francesco Maria Rovere, together with his claims on Sinigaglia, in marriage to Cesare's daughter, and, most important of all, to assist him in the recovery of the Romagna, the whole of which with the exception of a few fortresses had now revolted from him.

When the cities of the Romagna learned that the Duke's troops were disbanded, and that he had been forced to take refuge in the Castle of St. Angelo, many of them returned to their old allegiance. Giovanni Sforza had already been wel-

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came back to Pesaro; the people of Rimini recalled Pandolfo Malatesta; Forli recalled one of the Ordelaffi, which had been the reigning family there before the Riario; Imola hesitated between doing the same or declaring for the Church; Faenza, in default of a legitimate heir of the Manfredi, installed a bastard Astorre. But what disturbed the new Pope much more was that the Venetians took advantage of the confusion to extend their dominions on that side the Adriatic. They attacked Ravenna, occupied Rimini by arrangement with Pandolfo Malatesta, took various other castles in the territory, and besieged Faenza. This place sturdily defended itself, and appealed for aid to Julius II. The Pope sent the Bishop of Tivoli to Venice to protest, but without effect. Being without men or money, Julius could do no more, and it therefore seemed advisable to allow Cesare to reconquer the Romagna and leave him there for a time as vicar, although from the first Julius made no secret of his determination that all wrongly alienated States must be restored to the Church. Immediately on his elevation he had given the Duke apartments in the Vatican and treated him with great consideration. Strangely enough, that master of dissimulation seems to have believed in the sincerity of all the Pope's professions. He even declared that he had "found a new father."

Cesare, however, seemed to be stunned and stupefied by his change of fortune. Machiavelli, who was then on an embassy to Rome, found him

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a very different man from the inscrutable commander whose secrecy of plan and swiftness of action had seemed so impressive a year previously at Imola. Cardinal Soderini found him suspicious and irresolute. The Cardinal of Elna thought him so confused as to be completely out of his mind. And the Pope told the Venetian Ambassador that the Duke was so changeable and incomprehensible that he did not know what to make of him. At the same time nobody knew what were Julius' intentions towards Cesare; although on November 17 Giustiniani wrote home his suspicions that the Pope was secretly planning the Duke's destruction. Machiavelli seems to have been much of the same opinion, for when informing the Ten that the Duke proposed to pass through Tuscany, provided he could obtain their safe conduct, with 300 light horse and 400 infantry, the envoy adds that the Pope, who is pressing him to go, has also written to request this safe conduct, but does not care that the Duke should get it. The request so lukewarmly backed up was refused; whereupon Cesare hotly told Machiavelli that he had already sent on some of his troops and could not wait. He also burst out into furious reproaches, and threatened to side with Pisa, Venice, or the very Devil himself, in order to be revenged on the Florentines. To pacify him, Machiavelli promised to write again to Florence; and suggested that the Duke should send one of his officers there to negotiate further. What Machiavelli did write was that the Florentines might safely do what they pleased with the Duke's



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messenger, and also have his troops arrested and disarmed at the first convenient opportunity.

On November 19 Cesare started down the Tiber in a boat for Ostia, whence he was to sail to Spezia, and thence go by land to Imola. Soon after he had left, news arrived that Faenza had surrendered to the Venetians. This caused the anxious Julius a sleepless night. He may have feared, as Creighton supposes, that the appearance of Cesare in the Romagna once more might create such a dread of his vengeance that the other cities would throw themselves into the hands of Venice. He may have feared that Cesare, once more established in the Romagna, might defy the Papacy. However this may be, next morning he sent the Cardinals of Volterra and Sorrento after Cesare to command him to give the passwords and surrender into the hands of the Church the citadels of Cesena, Forli and Bertinoro, on the understanding that they should be returned to him when the danger from Venice was past. Cesare had previously offered to surrender these fortresses on condition that as soon as the Venetians were driven out of the Romagna he should be confirmed as Duke; but Julius, not wishing to commit himself to this, had declined the offer. Cesare, who now thought he was on his way to get back his duchy with or without the Papal help, now refused to surrender his forces. But he had not got far enough away to be out of the Pope's clutches. He was arrested by Julius' orders on board of one of the galleys at Ostia; and the Pope also immediately sent orders

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to Siena and Perugia to pursue and disarm the troops which had gone forward under Don Michelotto.

Cesare was brought back to Rome under a strong Papal guard on November 29. It is said that both Guidobaldo of Urbino and Giovanni Giordano Orsini urged the Pope to put an end to his life; but this was not Julius' policy. He kept the Duke in safe custody, but assigned him apartments in the Vatican and treated him with much consideration, hoping to induce him by peaceable means to surrender the fortresses. Four days later his persuasions seemed to have had their effect; for, on condition of receiving a written guarantee of his Romagna territories, countersigned by the Cardinal of Rouen, the Duke sent off Pietro d'Orvieto with the passwords, accompanied by Papal messengers to take possession of the strongholds. On their arrival at Cesena, however, the governor of the citadel refused to take any such instructions whilst his master was a prisoner, and hanged d'Orvieto from his battlements. Julius, suspecting trickery and highly incensed, confined Cesare in the Torre Borgia and confiscated all his property. Before the end of the month, however, a momentous event occurred which, whilst it shattered all Cesare's hopes of aid from France, at the same time greatly increased the influence of his friends the Spanish cardinals. On December 28 the great captain Gonsalvo de Cordova completely defeated the French on the Garigliano; and with the capitulation of Gaeta, which followed on

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January 1, 1504, the French finally lost all footing in Naples.

The Pope found himself unable to obtain possession of the citadels of Cesena, Forli and Bertinoro without Cesare's consent, which the latter would not give without securing his freedom. At length, on January 29, 1504, it was agreed that the Duke should go to Ostia under the charge of the Spanish Cardinal, Carvajal, on the condition that if he delivered up these three castles to the Pope within forty days he was to be set at liberty. On February 16 Cesare was conducted to the fortress of Ostia and thence opened up communication with his castellans. The captains of Cesena and Bertinoro at first insisted upon the Duke's liberation before they would listen to any proposals. When this had been accommodated, the governor of Forli demanded 15,000 ducats for the payment of his troops, which the Pope would not consent to give until he had made Cesare give security for the money. At length, however, everything was concluded to the satisfaction of Cardinal Carvajal, who, suspecting that the Pope would raise further difficulties for the purpose of retaining the Duke in his power, allowed the prisoner to depart on April 14. Cesare, who also had suspected the same thing, had applied to Gonsalvo de Cordova for a safe conduct and two galleys to conduct him to Naples.

Having been received in Naples by Gonsalvo de Cordova with every demonstration of friendship and honour, Cesare Borgia soon showed that he had

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by no means lost all hope of recovering his dominions. At first he proposed to go to the help of Pisa against Florence; then a rising in Piombino seemed to offer a better opening for his designs, this being the place which he had wrested from Jacopo Appiano and strongly fortified to form a basis for his operations against Tuscany. Gonsalvo seemed to approve of his projects, gave him leave to raise in Naples whatever troops he required to take with him, and even offered to provide him with galleys for his convoy. But all the time he was only waiting instructions from King Ferdinand, and practising on the Duke the same dissimulation with which Cesare had been so expert in deluding others. On May 27, having made all his preparations and being ready to set sail for Piombino, the Duke had a long conference with the Spanish general, who entertained him with demonstrations of friendship and embraced him at parting. But he had no sooner left Gonsalvo's chamber than he was arrested and carried off to the castle of Ischia. This was done by Ferdinand's orders at the instigation of the Pope; and Gonsalvo was evidently ashamed of his own part in the matter, for he immediately sought to find and destroy the safe conduct which he had sent to the Duke at Ostia. Julius II, who had written to Gonsalvo requesting him to keep an eye on Cesare and prevent him doing anything to the prejudice of the Church, had also written to Ferdinand and Isabella at the same time charging Gonsalvo with permitting Cesare to conspire against

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the Papacy ; complaining that Cardinal Carvajal had set the Duke free, contrary to instructions, before he had carried out his promises ; and alleging that the latter had sent money to the governor of Forli and encouraged him to retain possession of the castle ; wherefore he begs their majesties to put a stop to these proceedings which disturb the peace of Italy and the Holy See. Forli was recovered by a stratagem. Gonsalvo promised to release Cesare from his prison provided he surrendered Forli to the Pope. The Duke wrote to his captain accordingly, and the castle was given up on August 10. Ten days afterwards Cesare was released from his prison, but it was only to be put on board a galley and shipped to Spain ; where he was confined, with but a single servant to wait upon him, in the castle of Medina del Campo, near Valladolid in Castile.

Cesare's wife, the Duchess of Valentinois, his brother-in-law the King of Navarre, his sister Lucrezia, and the Spanish members of the Sacred College all petitioned for his release. On the other hand, it is said, his sister-in-law, widow of the Duke of Gandia, petitioned for his execution as the murderer of her husband and of the Duke of Bisceglia. Neither party obtained any satisfaction, however, and for two years Cesare remained in strict confinement in Medina del Campo. But on October 25, 1506, he effected his escape. By means of a rope, said to have been brought him by the chaplain of the place, he let himself down from the window of the highest room in the tower,

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and mounting a horse that had been placed in readiness by the Count of Benevento, managed to elude his pursuers and reach the territories of his brother-in-law, the King of Navarre. The rope supplied him being too short, he had badly injured himself in his descent from the tower; and his servant, who had preceded him, having broken both legs, was perforce abandoned, and left to be killed on his discovery by the guards of the fortress.

From the court of Navarre in Pamplona, Cesare Borgia petitioned Louis XII for reinstatement in his duchy of Valentinois and for permission to enter the French service. But Louis, being now at peace with Spain and at war with Navarre, was deaf to both requests. Cesare also sent his secretary, Federigo, to Ferrara and Mantua, ostensibly to bring the news of his master's escape, but really to see how matters stood in Italy, and ascertain whether there was any opening for a return to the Romagna. Curiously enough, Federigo arrived just in time to report to his master that Pope Julius had taken possession of Bologna, which Cesare had so long coveted as a capital for his province. Julius was greatly disturbed to hear of the Duke's escape, for he knew well enough that Cesare could still command a considerable following in the Romagna, and that he was a firebrand who would not scruple at any conflagration for the furtherance of his ambitious designs. But the Pope's disquietude on this score was not of long duration. Navarre was at issue with one of his feudatories, the Count of Lerin; and in February 1507 Cesare invested

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Lerin's City of Viana on behalf of his brother-in-law. On March 12, whilst in pursuit of a foraging party from the city, Cesare out-distanced his own men and was lost to their view in a ravine. Seeing themselves pursued by but a single horseman, the foragers turned upon him, and he was quickly overpowered and slain. They did not know who he was, but, tempted by the richness of his armour they stripped the corpse and left it lying naked on the ground, where it was soon afterwards found by a detachment of his own men who had been sent in search of him.

Several authors have remarked on the singularity of the coincidence that Cesare Borgia should have died in the diocese of Pamplona and been buried in the cathedral of the see to which he had been appointed bishop in his early boyhood ; Providence, as one of them moralises, suffering him to be placed when dead where he would not remain when alive. But this is not strictly correct ; for Cesare Borgia was buried in the church of Viana, where a florid Gothic tomb was erected to his memory. A pompous inscription in Spanish read to the following effect :

*Here lies within a small space  
One who was dreaded,  
Who everywhere held in his hands  
Both Peace and War ;  
The passer-by who seeketh  
Anything more laudable  
Or more admirable  
Will need to travel far.*

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But the tomb has disappeared. About the end of the seventeenth century a bishop of Calahorra, in whose diocese Viana lay, happened to be a descendant of a former bishop who had been imprisoned by Alexander VI for heresy. Taking advantage of some restorations in the church, this vindictive ecclesiastic ordered Cesare Borgia's sarcophagus to be destroyed and the bones which it contained to be thrown away.

Although as a youth Cesare Borgia exhibited something of the charming amiability and gaiety with which his father and his sister were so richly endowed, a more sombre expression seems to have become habitual with him from the time of his laying down the cardinalate and beginning the career of a secular prince at the age of twenty-three. Unlike Alexander VI, who to the end of his days maintained an almost boyish joviality and frankness, Cesare became silent and reserved, held himself haughtily aloof from everybody, including even his own trusted followers, and surrounded all his actions with mystery. He was fond of going about masked, and was often inaccessible in the daytime because he had been occupied during the night—whether by business or by pleasure nobody knew. He was inordinately ambitious, supremely egoistic, insatiably greedy of "glory," treacherous to his allies, vindictive and mercilessly cruel to his enemies, and absolutely unscrupulous in the carrying out of his designs. Endowed with an iron will, a cool, cautious, penetrating intellect, much intuitive knowledge of human nature, and the cunning



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of a fox ; astute in his calculations, masking his intentions with consummate hypocrisy, and swift in action as soon as the right moment had arrived, he remorselessly swept every obstacle from his path.

Some modern writers have ventured to describe him as a paragon of Renaissance culture, equally accomplished in the arts and in arms. But there is little warrant for such a characterisation. He possessed none of that passionate appreciation of art and letters which was displayed by Ludovico Sforza and the Dukes of Urbino, nor is it possible to credit him with even such a degree of literary and artistic culture as was shown by the Malatesta of Rimini and by many other of the bloodthirsty and dissolute tyrants of the time. His stealing of Duke Guidobaldo's books and tapestries for the decoration of his own castle at Cesena, the pleasure which he is said to have shown in conversing with artists, architects and scholars, and his taking a laureate about with him to celebrate his campaigns in Latin verse are easily to be accounted for by his love of ostentation and his desire to follow the prevalent fashion of his country and his time.

He was remarkably athletic, and fond of displaying his strength and skill at bull-fights ; although both Burchard and Paolo Capello may be suspected of some exaggeration when they relate that during the Jubilee festivities of 1500 the Pope's son not only exhibited great skill as a matador in the circus erected in the Piazza of St. Peter, but also showed his herculean strength

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by striking off the head of one of the bulls at a single blow. Whatever may have been his exploits as an athlete, however, nobody surely ever obtained the reputation of a great soldier on such a slender record. The imitation of an ancient Roman triumph which was got up by the Pope to celebrate his son's return after the capture of Imola and Forli from a woman was all of a piece with the rest of the Borgian bombast and extravagance. For this man who, by crime and cunning and treachery, became for a short time ruler over a large part of Italy and the terror of all his contemporaries, although he successfully besieged a number of more or less insignificant cities and devastated the surrounding defenceless country, was a conqueror who never fought a single battle.

In the short period of five years Cesare Borgia had risen to a predominant position in Italy, and seemed within measurable distance of the kingly crown of his ambition, not by generalship and bravery in the field, but by craftily taking advantage of the confusion created by the invasion of the French to seize one after another a number of small contiguous principalities and unite them under one head. At the time of his father's death, as Machiavelli points out, he had all but achieved the accomplishment of his designs. He was not only secure in the Romagna, but had also possessed himself of Perugia and Piombino; and, being the acknowledged protector of Pisa, was in a position to seize Lucca and Siena without the Florentines being able to prevent him. Having raised himself

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to this position by the aid of France, he had begun to look about for new and less jealous allies in order to render himself independent of French assistance ; and had his father lived but a little longer there is small doubt he would have secured them. It was not so much his fault as the malignity of Fortune, says the admiring Machiavelli, that when Alexander VI died, Cesare himself was at the point of death, and likewise so hemmed in by the two powerful armies of France and Spain that he was condemned to inaction at the critical moment.

But his sickness, or the shock of his sudden misfortune, seems to have paralysed all his faculties. On the death of his father, although unable to make a Pope of his own choice, his position was a strong one. Yet he threw away every chance and failed to have any influence on the election. When the French army departed from Nepi, after the election of Pius III, had he been a soldier of courage and capacity, instead of sneaking back to Rome on the pretext of ill-health to continue his intrigues, he might have placed himself at the head of his army, cut his way through the gathering forces of the Orsini and Savelli, and held the Romagna in defiance of all his enemies. And on the death of Pius III in the following month, although it was not in his power to secure the election either of a Spaniard or of the French cardinal d'Amboise to the Papacy, he was quite strong enough to prevent the election of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere. How he can have been cajoled into assisting in the elevation of a cardinal who had been the lifelong enemy of his

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family, and whom he had so grievously offended, is unintelligible. It was his one error, says Machiavelli, and it was the cause of his destruction.

The ambition of this unscrupulous young upstart, backed by all the wealth and influence of the Pope, had raised him in the brief space of five years to a degree of unparalleled splendour and power. In the beginning of August 1503 he seemed to be on the point of founding a kingdom of central Italy, which would demean the Papacy to little more than a hereditary appanage of his family. With his death, at the age of thirty-two, at the paltry siege of Viana, the menace of the House of Borgia disappeared, like a meteor flashing across the summer sky.

Although the object of Alexander VI had not been to benefit the Church but solely to aggrandise his son, the final result of all his scheming was the ruin of that son and the exaltation of the Church. Before his time the Italian princes, and even the smaller lords and barons, had thought little of the temporal power of the Holy See. But the Borgia showed Julius II what a Pope with courage and ambition and money was able to do. They had exterminated the turbulent baronage, suppressed all faction in the patrimony, consolidated and annexed the Romagna. He took up the work where they left it, and carried it to its completion. He conquered Bologna, mastered the Venetians, and drove the French out of Italy. But instead of endowing his relations with the acquisitions he had secured, he left them all in the possession of

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the Roman Church, of which he did not forget he was only the temporary head. It is very commonly asserted that Machiavelli accounted Cesare Borgia the very incarnation of an ideal prince. But this is not strictly correct. What Machiavelli did was to instance Cesare as the type of "tyrant" best qualified in the peculiar condition of things then existing in Italy to found a new State. Undoubtedly he occasionally had visions that transcended this limited and immediately practicable project. An Italian monarchy, with Rome as its capital, and the temporal power of the Pope abolished, has arisen in our own times; and perhaps Machiavelli may be regarded as its prophet. But it is nevertheless true, as Gregorovius has pointed out, that the policy of the Borgia, which Machiavelli praised, not only did not avert but positively encouraged the rule of the foreigner, whilst it delayed the formation of a united Italy for more than three centuries.

## IX

### LIFE IN A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CITY

LUCREZIA BORGIA survived the downfall of the brother whose puppet she had been ; and we may now turn, with a sense of relief, to the record of her life in Ferrara. When she took up her residence in Castle Vecchio, the great and imposing stronghold which Duke Ercole had placed at the young couple's disposal, she looked down upon a city which in many respects presented a great contrast to the Rome which she had now left behind her for ever. Though not so large as the Eternal City, its population was more numerous, for during Ercole's reign it had doubled, and now numbered no less than 100,000 souls. The moral atmosphere of its court was undoubtedly more salubrious than that of the head of the Christian Church ; its government was more orderly, and the physical well-being of its inhabitants was better cared for. Ferrara was the home of a numerous and wealthy nobility, whose magnificent palaces, as well as the fine churches, convents, and other public buildings which adorned the streets, still remain to excite the admiration of visitors. Its university, which maintained forty-five well-paid professors, was only surpassed by those of Padua and Bologna.

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And in no other city of Italy were there to be found more distinguished men of literature and learning.

Duke Ercole had drained the extensive marshes round Ferrara, greatly to the improvement of the health of the city, had built dykes to restrain overflowings of the river Po, had encouraged agriculture and commerce, and by his rigorous enforcement of justice and the maintenance of an efficient police had made his city a far safer place to live in than Rome, where, as we have already seen, robbery and murder were matters of nightly occurrence. Laws were made at the Duke's pleasure, and they were administered by twelve judges who openly purchased their appointments, but Ercole is said never to have permitted the purchase by any person unfit for the office, and should any gross miscarriage of justice occur, the offender was promptly dismissed. Rioting was prevented by prohibiting the citizens from carrying arms, either by day or night, on penalty of being flogged by the city guard and the arms confiscated. Whoever attempted to rescue a prisoner from the custody of the police was liable to the same punishment as the culprit himself. Gambling was prohibited in any public place, under penalty of a fine and one month's imprisonment. Although duelling was prohibited, the custom was too firmly rooted amongst the higher classes, and could not be prevented. Owing to the enormous increase of the population being largely due to the influx of fugitives, of unknown

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or sometimes of too well-known character, from other States, a system of passports was instituted. Every boatman or carman bringing strangers into the city was obliged, under penalty of fine or imprisonment, either to conduct them to the police office or to give immediate notice of their arrival. Every stranger had to pay one solda to the podesta on his arrival and another on his departure. Whoever allowed a stranger to remain in his house without giving notice to the authorities was liable to a fine of a hundred scudi.

The markets and the food-supply of the city were strictly regulated and supervised by inspectors. The price, weight, and also the quality of the bread were fixed by law. The penalty on a baker for giving short weight was a severe fine for the first offence, and for a second offence flogging and imprisonment. Moreover Ercole proclaimed that inasmuch as it was known that there were bakers who kneaded the dough with their feet, which frequently were not clean, such practice would be punished with fine or imprisonment; and bakers were strictly enjoined to work their dough with clean hands and nails. Butchers were looked after equally well; the price of every joint was fixed by the authorities, and all bad meat was seized and destroyed. Every wine-seller had to procure a licence, and none were issued except to persons who brought testimonials of good character. Adulteration was severely punished; all wine entering the city was tested by the officials, no colouring-matter was allowed,



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and any wine found to be of bad quality was destroyed.

There were laws of extreme severity against women of disreputable character, notwithstanding that the Duke and his nobility were by no means of impeccable behaviour. Any woman convicted to the satisfaction of the judge of leading a disorderly or disreputable life was condemned to a fine of twenty-five livres, and to be imprisoned for two months. If unable to pay the fine, she was placed in a pillory in some public part of the city. If she offended again after this, both she and the keeper of the house in which she lived were banished from the city, their effects confiscated and sold, and the proceeds devoted to a fund for repairing the cathedral. It was also prescribed that, in order to secure their recognition in case they attempted to return, their noses should be cut off. Both Ercole and Alfonso carried out the provisions of this law, which was older than their time, but it does not seem to have effected its purpose. Down to 1530, debtors were treated with much harshness, being imprisoned in the same place as the vilest of criminals. At one time, if a man could not meet his obligations, from whatever cause, it was customary to carry him round the city on a car, surrounded by police officers and accompanied by a trumpeter, that his offence might be known to all. Afterwards he was exposed on a pillory for three days with a green cap on his head.

Over and over again, laws had been promulgated

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to restrain what one of them described as "the insane passion of women for dress;" but, as may readily be supposed, with very little effect. Leonello, Duke Ercole's eldest brother, had endeavoured to enlist the male portion of his subjects in a rather surreptitious campaign against the sumptuary sins of the females. He called a private meeting "for men only," and asked his audience if there was one amongst them who did not agree that the expenditure of women on dress was most extravagant and reprehensible to get up and say so. Of course nobody spoke; and consequently when he proposed a resolution declaring war against the long trains of ladies' gowns, their large open sleeves lined with costly fur, and other expensive items of feminine adornment, it was carried unanimously. He then promulgated an edict prohibiting any woman from spending more than a third of her dowry on dress and jewellery, and rendering it penal for traders to furnish women with goods on credit, or in any way assist them to evade this law. Ladies were prohibited from wearing trains to their dresses beyond a specified moderate length; and the wives of farmers or the bourgeoisie were forbidden to wear silk, or ornaments of pearls, gold, or even silver. In order to prevent evasion of this law indoors, Leonello contrived a plan whereby timid husbands or fathers might give information to the authorities with impunity. A box with a slit in its lid was placed just inside the entrance door of the Cathedral, beside the font, so that any man wishing to give information

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against a lady who wore trains or long sleeves or any other of the prohibited adornments might deftly drop in his secret accusation with one hand whilst crossing himself with holy water with the other. There were three keys to this tell-tale box, one held by an officer of the twelve judges, one by an officer of the podesta, and one by a representative of the syndic, whose duty it was to prosecute any lady so charged with defying the law. But Leonardo's edict had no better success than many other attempts to stem the tide of extravagance in dress that were made in Ferrara and elsewhere, especially in Venice, which set the fashions for Italy then as Paris does for Europe now.

The Ferrarese nobility were lavish in their hospitality, and on all festive occasions vied with one another in the profusion and expensiveness of their banquets. Of course this came to be imitated by wealthy burghers, and more than one law was made to check the wastefulness that ensued. There were few cities which surpassed Ferrara in the gaiety and brilliance of its carnival, but Ercole would not permit maskers to go about in the dress of monks or nuns, as was the practice in Venice, on account of the licence and scandal to which it gave occasion. And he introduced into the festivities a unique ceremony called the *Ventura*. Shortly after nightfall on the evening of the Epiphany it was his custom to make a progress through all the principal streets of the city, accompanied by a train of nobles and courtiers, and

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attended by a large number of carts headed by a band of music. The procession stopped at the houses of all the principal nobles and citizens, who each brought out a contribution of some kind of food, which was placed in the carts. When the procession returned to the palace about midnight, the collectors ate a hearty supper of the viands they had thus procured, and next morning the remainder of it was distributed amongst the poor. One of the chroniclers relates that in 1503, the first carnival after Lucrezia's arrival in Ferrara, the food collected on the first night of the Duke's *ventura* consisted of 15 lambs, 15 oxen, 13 calves, 5 goats, 5 rabbits, 2 pigs, 66 ducks, 1521 capons, 22 turkeys, 73 partridges, 18 peacocks, 60 quails, 191 cheeses, 250 boxes of confectionery, and 190 large sausages. The ceremony was repeated three nights in succession; and, after making ample allowance for the appetite of the collectors, there must have been more than a good meal left for the table of every poor person in Ferrara.

The fine arts received much encouragement at the Court of the Este, and Ercole, who loved music, maintained a numerous band of musicians, not merely to enliven balls, masquerades, and other secular diversions, but to perform in the splendid religious festivals which he was fond of attending in the cathedral. It was literature, however, and especially poetry, for which Ferrara was most renowned. Antonio Tebaldeo, the two Strozzi, Tito, and Ercole, as well as a host of minor poets, lauded Lucrezia in Latin or Italian verse; and

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the great Ariosto, who welcomed her on her arrival in a Latin epithalamium, afterwards made a flattering reference to her in his immortal "*Orlando Furioso*." Gregorovius says that the people, like the city, seem to have been of a serious cast, and given to the cultivation of the exact sciences. But this needs to be taken with the important qualification that there were no exact sciences. Military and civil engineering, to which both Ercole and his son Alfonso were devoted, attained to a higher degree of excellence there than anywhere else in Europe. But both theoretical and applied science were then in their infaney. For example, there was no such thing as a public clock in the whole of Ferrara, with the exception of a large dial affixed to one of the towers of Castle Vecchio; and this timepiece was moved, not by machinery, but by a man inside, who turned the hands and struck the hours, with nothing better than an hour-glass to regulate his procedure.

An equally illuminating example may be taken from the state of medicine and surgery. As in England and elsewhere at the same period, the art of the surgeon was combined with the humbler craft of the barber; a fact which only becomes intelligible when we remember that simple blood-letting was then considered a remedy for almost every disorder. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, and the consequent rise of modern medicine, did not take place until a hundred years later. The virtues of rhubarb, aloes, and some other simple, although of course still valuable,

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remedies were well known. But in case of sickness people placed as much reliance on the astrologer as on the physician. Ferrara, like Padua and Bologna, was celebrated for its school of medicine, but some notion of the qualifications of its practitioners may be obtained from the perusal of a medical diploma granted there as late as 1642, which the historian Citadella discovered in the archives of Ferrara, and which William Gilbert saw, engraved on parchment, in the library of that city. A certain Generoso Marini, wishing to practise as an authorised physician, applied to the judges for a diploma, and duly presented himself for their examination. What happened is thus set forth in the document itself, which is duly signed by "Joannes Cajetanus Modoni, Judex sapientum civitatis Ferrari," and "Franciscus Altramari, Cancellarius."

"Having publicly examined and approved the science and knowledge of medicine of Signor Generoso Marini, and his possession of the wonderful secret called *orvietano*, which he exhibited on the stage built in the centre of the Piazza of this our city of Ferrara, in presence of its entire population (so remarkable for their civilisation and learning) and in presence of many foreigners and other classes of people, we hereby certify that, in our presence also as well as that of the city authorities, he took several living toads, not those of his own providing, which might have given suspicion of deception on his part, but from a great number of toads which had been caught in

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fields of the locality by persons who were strangers to him, and which were only handed to him at the moment of making the experiment. An officer of the court then selected from the number of toads collected five of the largest, which the said Generoso Marini placed on a bench before him, and, in presence of all the assembled spectators, he cut all the said toads in half with a large knife. Then, taking a drinking-cup, he took in each hand one half of a dead toad and squeezed from it all the fluids and juices it contained into the cup; and the same he did with the remainder. After mixing the contents together he swallowed the whole; and then, placing the cup on the bench, he advanced to the edge of the stage, where for some minutes he remained stationary. Then he became pale as death, and his limbs trembled, and his body began to swell in a frightful manner, and all the spectators began to believe that he would never recover from the poison he had swallowed, and that his death was certain. Suddenly, taking from a jar by his side some of his celebrated *orvietano*, he placed a portion of it in his mouth and swallowed it. Instantly the effect of this wonderful medicine was to make him vomit the poison he had taken; and he stood before the spectators in the full enjoyment of his health. The populace applauded him highly for the indisputable proof he had given of his great talent. And he then invited many of the most learned of those present to accompany him to his house, and he there showed them his dispensary, as well as his

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collection of many antidotes, and among them a powder made from little vipers, a powerful remedy in curing every sort of fever, as he had proved by different experiments he made on people of quality and virtue, all of whom he had cured of the fevers under which they were suffering. He also exhibited a wonderful balsam he had invented, which cured with great rapidity all bruises and wounds, as well as burns and scalds of every description. The said Generoso Marini has also great skill in drawing teeth, in which he exhibited an extraordinary dexterity. But that which most distinguished him was his wonderful power in restoring many persons to health who were suffering from divers incurable diseases. In consequence of the rare talent exhibited by Signor Generoso Marini, and as a proof of our love and respect for his wisdom, we have resolved by the authority placed in our hands publicly to reward him with our diploma, so that he may be universally recognised, applauded, and respected. In witness whereof we here set our hands and the public seal of the municipality of Ferrara.”

It is not very wonderful that Lucrezia's letters are plentifully besprinkled with pious expressions, and that she eventually devoted herself almost entirely to exercises of devotion, for both her father-in-law and her husband were strict observers of all the rites and ceremonies of the Church. Every year when Holy Week came round, Duke Ercole publicly washed the feet of a number of poor men, whom he and his family afterwards



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waited on at dinner, and to each of whom he presented a pair of thick shoes, a black cap, some stuff for a doublet or shirt, and half a ducat in money. At first the number so dealt with was twelve, as representing the number of the Apostles, but it was afterwards increased, and the year after Lucrezia's arrival in the city she and her husband and her brothers-in-law were called upon to assist at such an entertainment of no less than one hundred and sixty poor men.

Duke Ercole was also very fond of scenic performances of religious subjects, on which he lavished large sums of money. The "Adoration of the Magi," the "Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin," the "Passion," and other pictorial settings of Biblical events were performed in the Cathedral with great splendour, the Duke's servants and singers being dressed up to represent Angels, the Virgin, Jesus Christ, and even the Almighty himself. And there were frequent processions of a similar character in the streets. An account of one of these processions, taken from Lancellotti's chronicle, is quoted by Gilbert. A body of men dressed as prophets and angels paraded the streets, followed by one attired (how we are not told) to represent God Almighty. Then came three donkeys carrying paniers filled with food, and to these succeeded a giant, a bear, three magi on horseback, the Virgin with her Child, and then two devils. Virtue walked along flogged by demons and followed by Envy. Then came a group of devils held in custody by Saints Paul and Bernard.

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A dead Christ was borne along followed by his twelve disciples and by nuns, monks, and a solitary philosopher. St. Dominic, St. Francesco, and St. Sebastian were drawn along on a car by buffaloes. A dead Virgin, with St. Michael, and surrounded by the twelve Apostles, appeared on another car; and so on. The procession was accompanied by a number of nobles on horseback, and followed by a crowd of pedestrians estimated at about twelve thousand.

The Duke was opposed to Sunday trading and one of his edicts commanded that "no butchers shall presume to sell meat on Sundays, or fast days appointed to be kept holy by the Church, or during Lent, either in the Piazza or other public place, or expose it for sale in any way." An infringement of this law was punishable by fine, one-fourth of which went to the poor, one-fourth to the police, one-fourth to the Duke, and one-fourth to the informer. But the butchers were allowed to sell their meat on these days provided they did it secretly in their shops, and opened their doors no more than was necessary for a customer to enter. Ercole was also greatly angered at the objectionable practice of swearing in the streets. Another of his edicts quaintly sets forth that, desiring to make provision for those whose own sense of right, and reverence for their Divine maker, is not strong enough to make them eschew such a thing, and knowing that temporal punishment, as being nearer, is more feared than a greater punishment hereafter, he ordains that offenders

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in this respect shall be punished in a variety of more or less unpleasant ways, one being the nailing of the offender's tongue to a log of wood. Ercole was tolerant of the Jews, but they were condemned to live in a specified quarter of the city, and were governed by special laws. In 1496 he ordained that all Jews, with the exception of bankers and doctors of medicine, should wear a yellow badge, of at least four inches in breadth, on the left shoulder. Owing to his toleration there were more Jews in Ferrara in proportion to its population than in any other city of Italy. Astrology was a favourite study of many people in high position, and might therefore be practised with impunity. But for vulgar witchcraft there was no toleration, and several wretched old women were put to death for this unpardonable crime during Lucrezia's residence in Ferrara.

For some months she seems to have led a very quiet life. Castle Vecchio, which Duke Ercole appropriated to his son and daughter-in-law for their residence, still stands as one of the most imposing architectural monuments of the Middle Ages. It is an enormous, gloomy-looking stronghold, with four great towers overlooking the whole of Ferrara. It was connected by a gallery, and a subterranean passage under the moat, with the Estense Palace. For some years it had been used mainly as an arsenal, but to make it an appropriate dwelling for the heir-apparent and his wife it was decorated and fitted up with great luxury. In May 1502 Lucrezia suffered from low fever and

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ague, so Duke Ercole sent her off to his country palace at Belriguardo, some ten miles distant from the city. From the first she seems to have been on very good terms with her father-in-law. The day after her arrival at Belriguardo she wrote to thank him for a kind letter and some fish he had sent her, and to say that she found the place far more beautiful than she had anticipated. As time went on, and she promised to become a mother, he grew more anxious about her health, and desired her to write to him daily. On August 10 she reports that, although suffering greatly from fever the previous day, she had slept for five hours during the night and felt greatly refreshed. On the following day she gave a better account of herself, but shortly after she had a relapse, and Ercole wrote to her exhibiting a very affectionate anxiety. She returned to Castle Vecchio for her accouchement, but on September 5 the hopes of the Este were disappointed by the birth of a stillborn child. She had hardly recovered from the effects of this when she was once more attacked by fever, which resisted all the remedies prescribed by Dr. Ludovico Carri, the Duke's physician. Her father became alarmed, and his most skilful physician, the Bishop of Venosa, was sent off post haste to Ferrara to attend upon her.

Doctors differed in Ferrara in the sixteenth century as they do in Harley Street at the present day. The Duke's physician appears to have been a practitioner of the antiphlogistic school, and,

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like Dr. Sangrado in "Gil Blas," pinned his faith on plentiful bleeding and copious draughts of pure water. The Pope's physician, on the contrary, seems to have favoured a treatment rather more like that of modern times. When the latter entered Lucrezia's chamber, Dr. Ludovico Carri, lancet in hand, was just about to bleed her from the arm. The clerical medico sprang forward, seized the other practitioner's hand, and roundly charged him with doing his best to murder the patient. Dr. Carri defended his method of practice, declaring there was not the slightest hope of Lucrezia's recovery unless she were plentifully bled; and a violent dispute ensued between the rival doctors at the patient's bedside, although they did not come to fisticuffs like Gil Blas and Dr. Cuchillo. The dispute was only ended by Duke Ercole ordering Dr. Carri from the room and placing Lucrezia under the care of her father's ecclesiastical physician. Under the bishop's treatment she rapidly recovered, and on October 8 removed from Castle Vecchio to the Convent of Corpus Domini for change of air.

During 1503 and 1504 Lucrezia's husband was mostly away from Ferrara on political business. He was at the Court of France at the time of Pope Alexander's death and Cesare Borgia's imprisonment. But although Lucrezia wrote, imploring him to intercede for her brother, as she did also to the Gonzaga of Mantua, either they did nothing or their representations were of no effect. After the death of Alexander VI, Lucrezia's

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son Rodrigo and the young "Infans Romanus" Giovanni were exposed to great danger in Rome; but she did not have them sent to her at Ferrara. Young Rodrigo was still Duke of Bisceglia, for Alexander VI had obtained a diploma from Ferdinand and Isabella in May 1502 confirming the Borgia family in the possession of all their Neapolitan titles and estates. But Sermoneta and the numerous other possessions bestowed upon him had reverted to their former owners, and young Giovanni's duchy of Camerino had been recaptured by the last survivor of the Varani family. Her son's guardian, the Cardinal of Cosenza, proposed to sell Rodrigo's personal property and send him to Spain, where he would be safe, and when Lucrezia consulted her father-in-law on this point he agreed as to its wisdom. But the children seem to have remained for a time under the care of the Spanish cardinals in Rome, and then to have been sent to live under the guardianship of the Cardinals Ludovico Borgia and Remolini of Sorrento at Naples. Afterwards they were both taken charge of by Rodrigo's unfortunate aunt, Isabella of Aragon, widow of Gian-galleazzo Sforza of Milan, who, on the downfall of the two great houses of Sforza and of Aragon to which she belonged, had retired to Bari, of which city she had been made Duchess by Ludovico Sforza in 1499, and where she lived until her death in 1524.

After concluding his mission to France, Alfonso of Ferrara had gone to the Court of the Archduke

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Charles at Brussels, and then to that of Henry VII of England. He was just on the point of setting out to continue his negotiations at the Court of Spain when a messenger arrived to inform him of the alarming state of health of his father. He at once returned home, where he found that his wife had had another miscarriage, and that his father, now seventy-five years of age, was at the point of death.

## X

### LUCREZIA BORGIA, DUCHESS OF FERRARA

It was fortunate for Ferrara that the prince who ascended its ducal throne in January 1505 was a man of intelligence and resolution, for it was his lot to fight against famine, plague, invasion, excommunication, and the machinations of a Pope as ready to absorb his state for the benefit of the Church as Alexander VI would have been to do so on behalf of his own family. The winter of 1505 proved particularly severe, and the following spring exceptionally dry. Meat and vegetables became very scarce, and as the surrounding farmers and peasantry, reduced to a state of destitution, were totally unable to supply the city's needs, Alfonso, taking all the available money in his treasury, went off to Venice to purchase food, leaving Lucrezia to act as regent during his absence. The famine lasted throughout the whole of the summer, and the stock of provisions being comparatively short in Venice also, Alfonso had to pay exorbitant prices for anything he could get. The corn which he sent home was distributed amongst the most needy of the populace under the direction of Lucrezia and the municipal authorities. It is



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not surprising that in time of famine there should have been some rioting. This, however, Lucrezia put down with a firm hand, and at the same time showed strict impartiality towards all classes of her subjects. Some of the mob, imagining that the Jews seemed to suffer less than others, made an attack on their quarter of the city, plundering and burning shops and houses and maltreating the inhabitants. In almost any other city in Europe this would have been passed over with little notice. But Lucrezia insisted that there should be equal justice for all, and instantly commanded the podesta not only to repress such outrages, but to punish those who injured an Israelite with the same severity as those who injured a Christian.

During Alfonso's absence Lucrezia kept up a constant correspondence with him concerning both family affairs and matters of state. In a letter dated July 11 she thanks him for his offer to send her another physician, but thinks there is no occasion for it, as she feels much better. She appears to have been suffering from a tertian ague, for she reports that last night she slept better than the night before, although this was the third, and therefore the one to be dreaded. She is very happy to hear that he is well, and prays that the Lord God will preserve his Excellency in good health and spirits. And she concludes : " Recommending myself to the good grace of your Excellency, I subscribe myself your Excellency's most obedient consort, Lucrezia." A much longer letter, which was commenced on the 12th and finished on the

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13th of July, was devoted to an account of the killing of one of Alfonso's gamekeepers by a bailiff of the Procurator of Abbadia, which raised a case of complicated jurisdiction in which she did not quite know how to act. The relatives of the dead man wanted to follow the said bailiff into Abbadia, whither he had fled for refuge, but had been forbidden, so as to avoid all appearance of private revenge. The captain of the district, however, on making application to have the man given up to him had been met with the objection that Abbadia possessed certain privileges which took the matter out of the Duke's jurisdiction. Moreover, the commissary of Abbadia had written to say that the said bailiff had been furiously attacked by the said gamekeeper, who had killed him in self-defence; and that the said bailiff was falconer to the reverend cardinal, who had inquired into the affair and decided that it was a case of involuntary homicide. She had sent an officer to inquire into the matter, and had procured some evidence; but being afraid of doing anything that might show want of respect to the dignity of the reverend cardinal, she thought it well to receive the Duke's instructions before taking any further steps.

The early sixteenth-century courier was not always so regular and punctual as the modern postman. On one occasion Lucrezia, who had been anxiously awaiting answers to several of her letters, received three from the Duke at the same moment, dated the 23rd, 24th and 25th of the month respectively. Their receipt, she declares, gave her



*Lucrezia Piergini*  
*after the manner of Titian, in Casa Sampieri-Loren*



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such consolation and pleasure as it would be impossible to express. She rejoices to hear that his Excellency is in good health and spirits, and that he has taken ample precautions for his health and security. The expressions of comfort and courage which he has written with so much kindness of heart have given her inexpressible delight, and she will now pass her time happily. Altogether the correspondence represents Lucrezia in a very favourable light, and shows that she and her husband were on terms of confidence and affection.

But hardly had the famine abated when there came a visitation of the plague. In one of her letters, marked on the outside, "*Cito, cito, cito!*" (Haste, haste, haste!) she tells Alfonso that the plague has broken out in the house of a citizen named Valentini, who has since died, and that by the loan of linen and other articles it has been communicated to other houses, where more deaths have occurred. Alfonso hastened back to Ferrara, and proceeded to fight the dreadful pest with vigour and judgment. Cordons were placed round those parts of the city most seriously affected, nobody being allowed to leave or enter without permission. Carts were sent through the infected districts daily to remove all plague-stricken victims to the riverside, whence they were ferried over to a small island called *Il Boschetto*, which was turned into a lazaretto. Black flags with death's heads on them were affixed to these carts, the attendants wore a distinguishing costume, and in front of each of them walked a man ringing a bell

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to warn all who were uninfected to keep out of the way. Strict cleanliness was enforced throughout the city ; and any one attempting to enter it without a clean bill of health was liable to the punishment of death. One entry in the books of the municipality is interesting as showing how indefatigably some of the officials exerted themselves and also the personal attention of the Duke and Duchess. A reward of fifty livres was given to Jacopo Davento, notary of the twelve judges, for his exertions during the whole time of the plague in assisting the said judges in their personal inspection of those infected, in regulating the ministrations of doctors, barbers, and clergy, in writing an infinite number of letters, and in carrying daily to the illustrious Duke or his consort the Duchess Lucrezia a report of the progress of the plague and also of the condition of those who were sick. Notwithstanding her condition, Lucrezia remained in the city until she collapsed, when she was removed to Mutinæ, where, a fortnight afterwards, she was delivered of another stillborn child.

Alfonso d'Este had none of that taste for theatrical display which was so prominent a characteristic of his father. He devoted himself with great ardour and perseverance to mechanical studies and experiments, his chief interest being the casting of metals and the manufacture of cannon. This he carried out so successfully that his artillery was the best in Italy, if not in the whole of Europe, and enabled him to win more than one battle against otherwise superior forces.

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He also established a manufacture of porcelain and a school for its design and ornamentation, occasionally painting with his own hand some of the majolica vases which became a specialty of Ferrara. He bestowed great pains on the training of skilful workmen, whose society he seems to have preferred to that of his rather scandalised and discontented nobles. He not only equipped a sort of clubroom for them, with books, chess and other recreations, and formed a band of musicians with himself as instructor, but sometimes even invited the more skilful of these workmen to a seat at his dinner-table, which was more often in the foundry than in the palace. Meantime he left the maintenance of a brilliant court and the patronage of literature, learning and art to his wife.

There has been some exaggeration as to Lucrezia's own culture and literary acquirements, but there is no doubt that at the court of Ferrara she played the part of a patroness of literature and learning. And she was repaid in the way that crowned patronesses usually are. Giorgio Robusto dedicated a volume of poems to her; Antonio Cornazzano his *terza rima* Life of the Virgin and Life of Christ; Aldus Manutius several of the works which appeared from his celebrated press; and Ariosto would doubtless have dedicated to her the *Orlando Furioso* had he not been in the pay of her brother-in-law Cardinal Ippolito, and therefore under obligation to make the dedication to him. The praises of her beauty and virtue were sung by Antonio Tebaldeo, one of the literary ornaments of the court, who had

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originally been a physician, but having a fine voice and great proficiency on the lute, acquired some celebrity by singing songs of which both the words and the music were of his own composition. Tebaldeo, having given up medicine for music, finally abandoned music for literature, and attained considerable eminence both for his Latin and Italian versification. The two Strozzi, Tito the father and Ercole the son, equally eminent as poets, lauded her in almost identical terms; and Pietro Bembo professed not merely a poetical devotion but something more.

Bembo, the Venetian humorist, who afterwards became secretary to Pope Leo X and a cardinal, visited Ferrara in the early part of 1503, when he was thirty-three years of age, in company with his father; and found the society of the place so congenial that he remained for nearly three years. Whilst living with his poetic friends the Strozzi he commenced a correspondence with Lucrezia, which was maintained to the end of her life. His letters are printed in his works; and in the Ambrosian Library of Milan are preserved the manuscript of nine letters which Lucrezia wrote to him. These letters, seven in Italian and two in Spanish, which are in the handwriting of Lucrezia and of undoubted authenticity, are enclosed in a folding of white vellum, tied with four ribands, and accompanied by some verses in Spanish and a lock of yellow hair which tradition asserts to be one of the tresses of Lucrezia Borgia. This interesting relic, which was evidently tenderly preserved



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by Bembo as a memento of his charmer, has given rise to much discussion. By some it has been taken as a proof that even in Ferrara Lucrezia's life was not so strictly virtuous as it ought to have been. There is no doubt about Bembo having been in love with the beautiful Duchess; he confided his passion to his friends the Strozzi, and his letters are those of a most ardent admirer. Some of her letters to him are admitted even by her apologists to contain very warm expressions of attachment, "certainly to the extreme point that 'platonic love' could go." It is likely enough that the handsome, witty, accomplished Venetian cavalier cast her rather rough and uncouth Alfonso completely in the shade, and inspired something more than mere friendship in the breast of Lucrezia. But there is no proof whatever that their intercourse passed the bounds of propriety. At the same time, it is probable enough, as Gregorovius suggests, that Bembo's retirement from the court of Ferrara to that of Guidobaldo of Urbino in 1506 was due to his desire to be at a safe distance from danger that threatened him on account of the jealousy of Duke Alfonso.

The danger to be feared from the jealousy of princes was strikingly illustrated by a painful occurrence which happened just before Bembo's departure from Ferrara. Angela Borgia, sister of Cardinal Ludovico, who is described by one of the Ferrarese chroniclers as a very beautiful girl, had accompanied Lucrezia from Rome as her chief maid of honour. Amongst her many admirers was

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the handsome and dissolute young Cardinal Ippolito, Alfonso's brother. It seems probable that Angela encouraged the amorous cardinal up to a certain point; but when he became too pressing she treated his protestations of love with ridicule, and at length, to rid herself of his importunities, told him candidly that her affections were engaged to another. Ippolito, who was well served by a set of secret spies, received intelligence that the favoured rival was no other than his own illegitimate brother Giulio. As soon as he learned this he obtained an interview with Angela and demanded to know whether the report were true or not. Far from denying it, Angela avowed her preference for Giulio, whereupon the cardinal lost his temper, and in the course of the altercation that ensued Angela tauntingly declared that the beautiful eyes of Giulio were dearer to her than those of any other person in the world. Enraged beyond measure at this, the infuriated cardinal departed and planned a diabolical revenge. Four of his hired ruffians waylaid Giulio as he was returning from a day's hunting at Lucrezia's country seat of Belriguardo, and by the cardinal's orders and in his presence attempted to blind the young prince by putting out the eyes which Angela had found so fascinating. This dastardly crime, which took place on November 3, 1505, did not succeed quite so completely as its perpetrators desired; for although Giulio lost one eye, the other was saved by the skill of his surgeons. The injured prince demanded that his assailant should be punished

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in biblical fashion by an eye for an eye. But although the hired bravos were hanged, it was difficult to deal adequately with an offender of Ippolito's secular and ecclesiastical rank and dignity, so that Alfonso had to be contented with banishing his cruel brother from the territories of Ferrara.

But the matter did not end there. Many of the nobles complained of the banishment of the gay Ippolito as too severe a punishment, and protested against the Duke's despotism. There was also a strong party amongst the nobility who were discontented at Alfonso's absorption in his foundry and manufactories, and the consequent absence of that pomp and display to which they had been accustomed in the time of Duke Ercole. A revolution was decided upon, and a plot formed to murder Alfonso and to place on the throne in his stead his brother Ferrante, an ambitious and unscrupulous prince who had been brought up at the frivolous court of Naples, and who regarded what he considered the low mechanical tastes of his brother with disgust. Giulio, who was deeply aggrieved because Ippolito had not been punished more severely, was induced to join the conspirators, but only on condition that the cardinal should be put to death also, a stipulation to which Ferrante agreed because of his anxiety to obtain Giulio's co-operation. Some delay was caused by this, for Giulio was so eager to avenge the loss of his eye that he insisted on the cardinal being killed first, whilst Ferrante wished to make sure of the Duke. This being adjusted, however, according to

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Ferrante's plan, the conspirators secured the services of four persons who were continually about the person of the Duke, Count Albertino Boschetti, his son-in-law Roberto, who was a captain of the palace guard, Count Giovanni de Gherrario, and a French musician named Guasconi. The last-named villain was selected to put poison in the Duke's food, which he did; but for some unexplained reason the venom caused nothing worse than a temporary inconvenience. It was then determined to assassinate Alfonso at a masked ball to be held in the palace of one of the nobles. But the conspirators, finding no opportunity during the ball, proposed to attack the Duke as he returned home. Again they were foiled; for it so happened that Alfonso was joined at the door by a number of friendly nobles, who obtained permission to escort him to Castle Vecchio. Several other plans for the assassination failed in some similar accidental way; for of this conspiracy, concocted by his brothers and hatched in his own palace, Alfonso seems to have had no inkling.

Cardinal Ippolito in Rome, however, suspecting something sinister from the unwonted familiarity of Ferrante and Giulio, and knowing what good reason he had for keeping an eye on the movements of the latter, set his spies to work; and, having discovered the whole plot, instantly revealed it to Alfonso. This was in July 1506. Ferrante and Count Boschetti were promptly arrested, but Giulio got away to Mantua, where the Marchioness Isabella promised to protect him; Roberto fled to

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Carpi, and Guasconi escaped to Rome. When Ferrante was brought into his brother's presence he threw himself on his knees, confessing his guilt and abjectly imploring forgiveness. Alfonso not only sternly thrust him away, but struck out one of his eyes with a ceremonial staff that he carried in his hand. Ferrante was then confined in one of the dungeons of Castle Vecchio until the other conspirators could be arrested, in order that all might be tried together. The Marquis of Mantua at first declined to deliver up Giulio, alleging that the Marchioness had promised him protection; but on the production of proofs of his complicity in the plot he sent the prince to Ferrara.

All the prisoners pleaded guilty, and threw themselves on the Duke's mercy. They obtained little from the stern Alfonso. Boschetti and three other of the conspirators were executed as common felons in front of the Palazzo Ragione; and a few days afterwards the Duke ordered the erection of a scaffold, with seats around to accommodate a large number of spectators, in the courtyard of Castle Vecchio, for the more impressive punishment of his two brothers. He issued invitations to the nobles and principal burghers to attend on August 12, and when they arrived they found the block and all other requisites for the decapitation of the culprits arranged on the scaffold. Ferrante and Giulio were led in, accompanied by the common executioner with his axe. But when Ferrante placed his head upon the block, the Duke rose from his seat and in a loud voice commanded

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the proceedings to stop. Infamous as was the conduct of these two princes in having sought to shed a brother's blood, he said, and amply justified as he would be in beheading them for it, yet he shrank from having the slightest taint of the sin of Cain upon his conscience, and would commute their punishment to imprisonment for life. They were then conducted to the dungeons beneath the castle in which he and Lucrezia lived. Ferrante remained there until his death thirty-four years afterwards; Giulio was released after fifty-three years of imprisonment, when he had become an old man nearly eighty years of age.

Giovanni Guasconi remained at liberty some time after the others had been dealt with. He was a peculiarly ungrateful rascal, for he had been raised from mendicancy to a position of affluence by the man he attempted to poison. Some years previously, during one of his journeys abroad, Alfonso had heard the fellow singing in the streets of a French town, and being struck with the beauty of his voice had brought him to Ferrara, had him carefully trained, and introduced him into Duke Ercole's band of singers. On Alfonso's accession to the throne he had promoted Guasconi to a position of trust in the palace. For some time after his escape to Rome he remained in hiding, but eventually he obtained an appointment in the household of Cardinal San Giorgio. Cardinal Ippolito then soon discovered him and informed his brother Alfonso, who immediately wrote to demand the surrender of the culprit. The cardinal

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refused to deliver up any servant of his own, whatever crime might be charged against him; and after several fruitless applications Alfonso appealed to the Pope. Julius ordered the fellow's arrest, and, on the production of *primâ facie* evidence of his guilt, sent him a prisoner to Ferrara. On his arrival there it was all his guards could do to prevent his being torn to pieces by the mob; and on the following day he was hung out in an iron cage from one of the balconies of the castle in order that the people might give vent to their feelings by imprecation and insult. After a week of this treatment the miserable wretch took refuge in suicide, being found by his gaoler one morning strangled in his cell with the strips of a torn-up cloth.

On April 4, 1508, there were great rejoicings in Ferrara, for on that day, four years after their marriage, Lucrezia gave birth to a son and heir to the throne. The child was named after his grandfather Ercole, and in due time succeeded his father as Ercole II. Alfonso was away at the time, but he hastened home on the receipt of the welcome news, although he was obliged to leave again as soon as Lucrezia was convalescent. The good people of Ferrara showed their delight and loyalty by seizing the benches in the law courts, the schools, and the cathedral, and tearing out the window-frames of other public buildings to make fuel for congratulatory bonfires. And the poet Ercole Strozzi celebrated the event in a manner scarcely less extravagant. In an elegy on the recent death

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of Cesare Borgia, in which the exploits of that cunning and unscrupulous adventurer were likened to the famous deeds of his great namesake, he had attempted to console Lucrezia by assuring her that although, by the decrees of inexorable Fate, Cesare had to die, yet Minerva and Venus would not permit the descendants of the Trojans to be ruled over by aliens, and had obtained a promise from Jupiter in Olympus that from the conjoined lines of Este and Borgia (which sprang from the heroes of Troy and Greece respectively) there should arise a great king who would become the saviour of Italy. He now assured her that her infant was the promised saviour, who was destined to rival the illustrious deeds of his uncle Cesare and his grandfather Alexander, as well as those of the famous ancient heroes whose names they worthily bore. But the muse had not revealed to the unfortunate poet his own approaching fate; although in one of his elegies some expressions occur which indicate that he may have had some apprehensions of an untimely end.

The Strozzi belonged to an ancient and eminent family of Florence; but Tito Vespasiano had accepted a military appointment under Nicolo III and settled in Ferrara. His rank and talents and learning were such that Ercole employed him as ambassador to the court of Rome, and afterwards made him head of the twelve, or Chief Justice of Ferrara. Notwithstanding these employments, however, Tito found time to cultivate literature, and his Latin poetry is said to be of great excellence.



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Shortly before his death he had made some progress with an epic dealing with the life of Duke Borso d'Este ; and he left ten unfinished books of this poem to his son Ercole, who undertook to complete the work. But Fate had ordered otherwise. In May 1508 Ercole Strozzi was married to Barbara Torelli, the young and beautiful widow of Ercole Bentivoglio. Thirteen days later, on the morning of June 6, his dead body, pierced by twenty-two dagger wounds, the clothing torn to pieces, and locks of hair pulled out by the roots, was found lying in the streets not far from the Estense Palace. This ghastly tragedy created a profound impression in Ferrara, for Ercole Strozzi, then only twenty-seven years of age, had succeeded to the post of Chief Justice on the death of his father, was the pride of the whole city as a poet, and a favourite of the Duchess and the court.

The mystery of this murder has never been cleared up. No inquiry was instituted, says Paolo Giovio, and no man dared to name the murderer. Some writers have charged Lucrezia with the crime, alleging that she was in love with Ercole Strozzi and jealous of Barbara Torelli. But this preposterous theory will not bear a moment's examination. Others, with more plausibility, have ascribed it to the jealousy of Alfonso. The poet had undoubtedly written of Lucrezia in terms of the highest laudation and with an appearance of unaffected ardour. He broke out into extravagant raptures when she gave him a rose ; her eyes were

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like the sun which blinds those who gaze upon it ; her equal was not to be found on earth ; and so forth. But there is really no evidence that his raptures were more real than those of any other poet laureate. Neither is there very much in the contention that Lucrezia made Ercole many presents, and those of a kind implying great intimacy between them—such as gold brocade or satin for the making of splendid vestments—for, in the first place, it was a common practice to make presents of rich clothing in those days ; and, in the second place, if there had been any undue familiarity implied in these things they would never have been openly entered in her household books by her major-domo as “ to be presented by her Highness to the Magnifico Messer Ercole Strozzi.” Moreover, even if Alfonso had been jealous of Strozzi’s admiration for Lucrezia and of her making presents to him, it is highly improbable that he would have taken no notice of it while the poet was single, and yet ordered his death immediately after he had married a beautiful woman to whom it was well known that he had been devoted for some time. Most probably the dastardly deed was the work of a disappointed rival. Ercole Strozzi had courted Barbara Torelli for a year or more ; but she had been at the same time solicited with equal ardour by one of the Ferrarese nobles named Alessandro Pio. Cardinal Ippolito, who, as has already been seen, learned much from his secret spies in Ferrara, in a letter to a friend written shortly after the occurrence,

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named Alessandro Pio as the instigator of the crime, and a certain Mesino del Formo as the actual murderer. Gregorovius considers it proof of Alfonso's guilt that one so ready to punish the conspirators against himself, and usually so stern an upholder of the law, should have allowed the matter to drop so quietly. It must be admitted that this is a difficulty ; although it may, perhaps, be explained by the fact that the family of Alessandro Pio was just about to become allied to the ducal family by the marriage of his brother with a natural daughter of Cardinal Ippolito.

After 1508 the chroniclers of Ferrara have comparatively little to say about Lucrezia's doings, her personal history being eclipsed by the exciting political affairs of the state. From the moment of his accession Julius II had bent all his energies to the re-establishment of the temporal power of the Papacy. The House of Borgia having been politically annihilated, he resolved first of all to possess himself of those smaller independent states which had returned to the allegiance of their former lords. In August 1506 he set out at the head of his army against Perugia ; when Gianpaolo Baglioni, without waiting to be attacked, advanced to Orvieto and surrendered his territory. On September 12 the Pope entered Perugia, and having assumed the sovereignty, which he immediately delegated to Cardinal de' Medici, and taken Baglioni with fifty men-at-arms into his service, he advanced with his army to Imola and called upon Giovanni Bentivoglio to surrender Bologna. Giovanni, relying

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on the promised assistance of France, prepared to resist ; but Louis XII, who had now no further use for the ruler of Bologna, whilst he stood in need of the favour of the Pope, coolly ordered the troops he had despatched from Milan for Giovanni's assistance to co-operate with his assailants ; whereupon Bentivoglio fled, and on November 11 Julius II entered Bologna in triumph.

But this was only a beginning. Venice hitherto had gained rather than lost by the troubles and confusions of the rest of Italy, and was now at the height of her prosperity. Her growing influence, however, was a menace to more than one of the other powers ; and in December 1508 the League of Cambray was formed for her dismemberment. She was to be attacked on all sides, and the conspirators were to divide the spoil. The Emperor Maximilian was to have Roveredo, Verona, Padua, Vicenza, Trivigi, Friuli and Aquileja. The King of France was to receive the cities of Brescia, Crema, Bergamo and Cremona, with the whole district of Ghiaradadda. Ferdinand of Spain was to regain possession of the maritime cities of Trani, Brindisi, Gallipoli and Otranto, on the coast of Naples, which Venice had still contrived to hold after the subjugation of Naples by Spain. The Pope was to receive all that part of the Romagna, including the cities of Ravenna, Cervia, Faenza, and Rimini, which Venice had seized after the fall of Cesare Borgia. Several other smaller potentates joined the League, of whom the most important was Alfonso of Ferrara, whose territories were

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particularly exposed to the aggression of the Venetians.

The fortune of war favoured first one side and then the other ; but early in 1510 the Pope, having recovered Romagna, which was all he wanted, secretly deserted his allies, took the ban off Venice, and promised the Republic his future support. Ferdinand of Spain, who had recovered his maritime cities on the Adriatic, was already lukewarm ; and the futile Emperor Maximilian, having been driven out of Padua, had returned with the remains of his forces to Vienna. Louis XII and Alfonso of Ferrara were therefore left to carry on the war against Venice alone. Then Alfonso was ordered by the Pope to desist from hostilities ; and on his refusal to do so he was excommunicated together with all his family, and his dominions declared to be confiscated as those of a rebel against the Holy See. Alfonso rightly judged this to be merely a pretext to enable the Pope to seize the State of Ferrara and add it to the dominions of the Church.

The Duke of Ferrara had succeeded in taking possession of the districts of Este, Polesella, Montagnano and Monfelice, which he claimed as ancient heritages of his family ; wherefore the Venetians, who were specially incensed against him for the active part he had taken in the war, determined to punish him severely. They sent a fleet of eighteen galleys, accompanied by a considerable force of troops, up the Po, devastating the country on either side as they went along and filling the inhabitants of Ferrara with terror. Alfonso and

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his brother Ippolito, who also was a capable man of war, did not wait to be attacked, but proceeded down the stream with a flotilla of galleys to meet the enemy. The number of their forces was much smaller than those of the Venetians, but Alfonso was far superior in artillery ; and in a sanguinary engagement the invaders were totally routed, losing all their ships and about 3000 men. In the following year he was attacked again, for in December 1510, in the middle of the coldest winter ever known in Italy, the fiery old Pope, after besieging and capturing Mirandola, marched with his troops to Ravenna in order to combine with his ally in an assault on Ferrara. But Alfonso, in several engagements, defeated the united forces of the Pope and the Venetians to their considerable loss.

Louis XII and the Emperor proposed to retaliate for the Pope's desertion of them by calling a Council of the Church to depose Julius II, whereupon the Pope, in addition to convening a Council himself in the Lateran, in December 1511 formed what he called a Holy League, by which Venice and Spain united with him for the defence of the Church and to expel the French from Italy. The sanguinary battle of Ravenna, which was fought on April 11, 1512, practically annihilated the forces of the Holy allies, and was due in great part to the excellence of Alfonso's artillery. But owing to the enormous loss of men on the winning side, the death of their brilliant young leader, Gaston de Foix, and the neglect of his successor to follow up the advantage, the victory was equivalent to a

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crushing defeat, and within two months afterwards Julius succeeded in driving the French completely out of Italy.

Alfonso, now left to shift for himself, was naturally anxious for a reconciliation with the Pope. It had so happened that when Fabrizio Colonna had been taken prisoner at the battle of Ravenna he had fallen into the hands of the Duke of Ferrara, who had treated him with great consideration, and, after the expulsion of the French from Italy, had restored the captive to liberty. He therefore applied to the man he had thus befriended, and who was at the moment in Rome, to make his peace with the Pope. Fabrizio undertook the office, and reported that his Holiness seemed disposed enough to accommodate matters, but had suggested that it would be more appropriate and according to usage for the Duke to come to Rome himself, publicly to express his regret for having acted as a rebellious son of the Church. Accordingly, in June 1512, Alfonso went to Rome; and having requested pardon for having borne arms against the Holy See, and promised to behave as a faithful feudatory in future, he was received by the Pope with apparent friendliness. Julius appointed a committee of six cardinals to confer with Alfonso; but the Duke was aghast when he found that the only terms on which he could secure a pardon and the removal of the ban of excommunication were that he should give up the State of Ferrara, accept in place of it the small town of Asti in Lombardy, undertake that he and

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all his family would reside in that distant town, and guarantee never to return to Ferrara, which must henceforth be considered one of the States of the Church.

Alfonso was by no means the kind of man to submit tamely to any such conditions, and he resolutely refused. Moreover, what the Pope's intentions were he was able to see without a shadow of a doubt when intelligence reached him that whilst he was humbly suing for pardon at the Papal court the Pope's troops, with the Pope's nephew at their head, had entered his territories and were threatening Ferrara. He instantly made hurried preparations to return, but the Pope forbade him to leave Rome. Then occurred an instance of grateful return for kindness received which it is peculiarly refreshing to come across amidst such a continuous record of unblushing perfidy and treachery. One morning about day-break Fabrizzio Colonna, with a small band of his trusted adherents mounted and armed, endeavoured to smuggle Alfonso, whom they had carefully disguised, secretly out of the city. But on their arrival at the gate of St. John Lateran the officer of the guard refused to let them pass. It was too late to retreat, so Fabrizzio, trusting to the speed of his horses, broke through the guard and conducted the Duke in safety to the fortress of his family at Marino. Thence, in company with young Prospero Colonna, Alfonso set out homewards, travelling by devious routes, and with various changes of disguise, in order to elude the Pope's

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emissaries who were sent out after them in every direction. Sometimes they passed for two private soldiers going to join their regiment, sometimes for two huntsmen, sometimes for two friars on pilgrimage to a shrine, and on one occasion Alfonso passed for Prospero's cook. At length, after much wandering in this fashion, and the endurance of great hardships, the Duke arrived safely in his own city of Ferrara.

Soon after his return he attempted to appease the angry Pope by a submissive embassy ; and as none of his nobles were very much disposed to undertake so dangerous an office, he fixed upon his brother Ippolito's retainer, the celebrated poet Ariosto, for the purpose. On Ariosto's arrival in Rome he found that the Pope was recreating himself for a short time at Ostia, and accordingly followed him thither. But no sooner had the poet been admitted to the Pontiff's presence and his errand explained than the irascible Julius commanded him to leave the place instantly or he should be thrown into the sea. Fortunately for the Este dynasty of Ferrara, Julius II died in the following February and was succeeded by Leo X.

During Alfonso's prolonged absence from Ferrara Lucrezia had proved herself a capable regent, acceptable to noble as well as to burgher, and benevolent to the poor. Her second son, who was christened Ippolito after his uncle, was born in 1509, shortly before the war broke out. In July 1510 unhappy memories of her earlier life must have been recalled by the death of her

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divorced husband, Giovanni Sforza. Giovanni, like most of his illustrious family, was a man of much culture, and spent a good deal of his time alone, in his castle of Gradara, studying divine philosophy. He had married again in 1504, and he left an infant son to succeed him, thus incidentally giving the lie to the alleged reason for his divorce from Lucrezia. But the child died in 1512, and Julius II seized the opportunity to transfer the lordship of Pesaro to his nephew, Francesco Maria Rovere. In the same year died Rodrigo, Lucrezia's son by her second husband, the murdered Duke of Bisceglia. As already mentioned, this boy had been living for some years with his aunt, Isabella of Aragon, at Bari, not far from his hereditary duchy of Bisceglia. He was evidently being brought up and educated with the "Infans Romanus," Giovanni Borgia, who was about a year older than himself, for Lucrezia's book of household expenditure shows that in March 1505 she sent a present of brocade and damask to Bari for her son Rodrigo, and another entry in April 1508 records an expenditure for both of them, who were then at Bari together under the care of the same tutor. Why Lucrezia left her three-year-old son behind her in Rome and never set eyes on him again is a mystery which has never been cleared up, and is rendered all the more inexplicable by the fact that, on one occasion at least, in 1506, she had his companion Giovanni brought to her at Ferrara.

Although the Duke had saved his state, the prolonged war had exhausted his treasury, and

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plunged the greater part of his subjects into great misery and distress. As it became necessary for Alfonso to appeal to his nobles to make some sacrifice to mitigate the miseries of the people, he and Lucrezia set them an admirable example. He sold off the silver plate and rich furniture of his palace, and she pawned her jewels. An inventory of these, made in January 1516, when presumably they were redeemed and returned to the custody of her chamberlain, enumerates three hundred articles, and shows Lucrezia to have possessed a collection of ornaments that for beauty and costliness were probably unequalled by that of any other princess in Europe.

There were many charitable institutions in Ferrara, wherein both the Duke and Duchess took a laudable interest. There were almshouses for the aged and infirm, workhouses for the able-bodied in temporary distress, a foundling hospital, and an asylum for orphans. Many of these charities were personally superintended by Lucrezia and her husband. One institution in which she took a special interest was an asylum and school for the bashful poor, the object of which was to give assistance to those who had once been well-to-do but through unavoidable misfortune had fallen into decay. Alfonso revived and enforced a law of his father Ercole which compelled every person who made a will to bequeath the sum of five soldi to this Hospital of St. Ann, to provide for the poor whom it sheltered and also to maintain the fabric of the building. In 1505 he ordered

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collections to be made throughout the whole of his duchy for the building of a special hospital for those suffering from contagious diseases, in order to separate these from the patients in other hospitals. But indiscriminate charity was discouraged. Begging in the streets was prohibited; for the first offence the mendicant was imprisoned, for the second he was flogged also, whilst any person detected in the act of giving money to a mendicant was fined two scudi. A Monte de Pietà was founded in Ferrara for lending small sums of money to the poor, on pledge but without interest for six months; after that a small interest was charged if the pledge were renewed. Previous to this the Jews of Ferrara had practised extortionate usury, not only charging 60 per cent. per annum to the rich and 100 per cent. for a single month to the poor, but obliging the borrowers to take out much of their loans, not in cash, but in goods, very often goods of no use to them or to anybody else.

Several more children were added to the family of the Duke and Duchess: in April 1514 a son, Alessandro; in July 1515 a daughter, Leonora; and in November 1516 a fourth son, Francesco. Whatever may be said about her apparently callous indifference towards her son by the Duke of Bisceglia, she appears to have been a careful and attentive mother to her children by Alfonso of Ferrara. In the year 1516 she had some correspondence with the poet Gian-Giorgio Trissino, who was then at the court of Leo X, and it has been suggested that he was another of her poetic

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admirers for whom she cherished a more than poetic attachment. Trissino is notable as the writer of *Sofonisba*, the first regular tragedy to make its appearance after the revival of letters, and also as the introducer of *versi sciolti*, or blank verse, into Italian literature. He was also of high repute in his own time as a man of learning ; and the object of Lucrezia's correspondence with him seems to have been the sufficiently innocent one of obtaining this learned man's advice respecting an appropriate tutor for her eldest son, Ercole. Five of her letters to Trissino, written in a tone of friendly familiarity, may be found in the appendix to Roscoe's "Life and Pontificate of Leo X." But those who scent scandal in this affair rely more on a letter, of unascertained date, which Trissino wrote to Lucrezia's undoubtedly ardent lover Bembo. Lucrezia had presented Trissino with a medallion portrait of herself, which the admiring Bembo coveted ; and on the other's refusal to part with it had exhibited considerable annoyance. Trissino replied saying that he could not conciliate Bembo's regard in this way, though he would willingly purchase it with anything else of much higher value ; and he thought his friend's usually mild and forbearing temper had been unreasonably ruffled. For, he says, " if the resemblance of this medallion to the lady you admire justifies your wish to possess it, why should it not for the same reason justify my wish to retain it ? " He adds that " two strong ties, affection and fidelity, forbid my making you the gift you request " ; and he

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concludes with the diplomatic politeness so characteristic of the time, that the regret which he feels at not being able to comply with the request is much greater than any disappointment his correspondent can feel in having made it in vain. If there were no stronger evidence than this against Lucrezia in respect of the other charges made against her, the modern whitewashers of her memory would have had an easy task.

On November 26, 1518, Lucrezia's mother died in Rome at the age of seventy-seven. After the election of Pius III she had returned to Rome from Nepi in company with her son Cesare. As her title to a good deal of her property was by no means unquestionable, she had resorted to various artful expedients for its preservation. In December 1503, after the election of Julius II, and whilst Cesare was a prisoner in the Torre Borgia, she presented her house on the Piazza di Merlo by deed of gift to the Church of S. Maria del Popolo, reserving the use of it during her lifetime. She sold several other houses, and afterwards revoked the bargain, on the ground that it had only been made from fear of confiscation. But she received the protection of a number of powerful friends, especially of the Farnese and the Cesarini, and of those cardinals who were relatives or creatures of Alexander VI, so that she was able to remain in Rome unmolested for the remainder of her life. She kept up a correspondence with her children; and in 1515 we hear of her ten-year-old grandchild, son of Giuffré, Prince of Squillace, living with her

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in her house in Rome for a time. She was described as "*la magnifica e nobile Madonna Vanozza*"; and, as mother of the reigning Duchess of Ferrara, was regarded as a lady of high position, whose society many thought it worth while to cultivate. Several of her letters to Lucrezia have been preserved, and they exhibit her as a shrewd old woman of the world, of no very sweet temper, and with a strong determination to stand up for her rights. In one she claims some of the jewels in her daughter's dowry, which she alleges had been given in mistake. In another, dated February 1515, she prefers a number of complaints against a certain Paolo Pagnano, who, she says, is perpetually annoying her with claims on some of her property, as though she were the vilest person in the world and unable to find a friend to stand by her. Wherefore she requests her daughter and son-in-law to send some discreet person to the illustrious Duke of Milan to circumvent the machinations of the said Paolo Pagnano. She concludes her letter by recommending herself to her Excellency of Ferrara, and to the illustrious Duke, and to the children, for all of whom she prays continually, and she signs herself "*Your happy and unhappy mother, Vanozza Borgia de Catenai.*" In another communication, dated December 19 of the same year, Vanozza showed that she had not associated with the wily Rodrigo Borgia without acquiring some of his finesse. The letter, which had been written by some one else for her to sign, begs Lucrezia's influence on behalf of a certain Gianbatista of

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Aquila, who had claims on some benefices in the diocese of Capua; but after her signature she managed to insert a hurried postscript in which she told Lucrezia she had been obliged to sign the letter, but wished her daughter to do no more than she pleased in the matter.

For some years past Madonna Vanozza had been ostentatiously devout. She associated much with priests and monks, and Paolo Giovio, who became acquainted with her in her later days, describes her as a worthy and upright woman. She benefited a number of religious foundations in Rome, including the Company of the Gonfalone *ad Sancta Sanctorum*, whose records show that she gave them her jewels, which were of considerable value, that she paid a famous silversmith two thousand ducats to adorn their abode with a magnificent work of art, and that she left them enough property by will to bring in annually four hundred ducats for feeding the poor and the sick. Wherefore, to show their gratitude to this "noble and honourable lady," the holy brotherhood decided to celebrate her obsequies with great pomp, to honour her memory with a splendid monument, and to have Mass said for the repose of her soul every year on the anniversary of her death in the Church of S. Maria del Popolo. According to the chronicler Sanuto, her funeral was attended by the Pope's chamberlain and was almost as magnificent as that of a cardinal. Hieronymus Picus, her executor, placed an inscription on her tomb setting forth that she was the mother of Cesare Duke of



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Valentino, of Giovanni Duke of Gandia, of Giuffré Prince of Squillace, and of Lucrezia Duchess of Ferrara, and that she was conspicuous for her uprightness, her piety, her discretion, and her intelligence. For more than two hundred years, says Gregorovius, the priests of S. Maria del Popolo sang masses for the repose of her soul. Why they do not continue doing so to-day, or how and when her tombstone disappeared from the church it is vain to ask.

In March of the following year Lucrezia heard of the death of the Marquis of Mantua, and wrote to her bereaved sister-in-law that it had so grieved her that she was more in want of consolation herself than able to offer any. Yet she would have gone to Mantua, she said, had not the state of her health prohibited travelling. She was in an advanced state of pregnancy, and, after two months of great suffering, on June 14 was delivered of a stillborn child. Eight days later she dictated a letter to Pope Leo, telling him she knew she could not recover, and asking his blessing on her soul. She died on June 24, 1519. Her husband, who had been in constant attendance on her, immediately wrote to his nephew, the new Marquis of Mantua, to acquaint him with the melancholy news. He was a rough soldier, but he declared he could not write without the tears coming into his eyes to find himself deprived of one who had been so excellent a companion, of such an exemplary life, and united to him in the bonds of so tender a love. On the 28th she was buried, after a simple

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service, in the convent of the Sisters of Corpus Christi, beside the coffin of Alfonso's mother. The grave has long since disappeared ; and, strange to say, of the last resting-places of Pope Alexander, of Cesare, and of Lucrezia Borgia not a trace now remains.

For seventeen years Lucrezia had been at the head of a court famous throughout Italy for its intellectual culture and the eminence of its men of letters ; but her own acquirements in this direction have undoubtedly been exaggerated. Gregorovius has furnished us with a catalogue of the books which she brought to Ferrara from Rome, seventeen in number, beautifully bound in purple velvet with mountings of silver and gold, from which it is evident that, down to that date at any rate, her studies had not been very profound. Strict observance of the outward forms of religion was the first and most important thing in the education of Italian ladies ; and of this teaching the Pope's daughter had evidently had her full share. Her secular culture was probably, *mutatis mutandis*, much on a par with that of a fine lady of our own day. She played on the lute instead of the piano, read poems instead of prose novels, and in place of the modern smattering of French and Italian had a corresponding superficial acquaintance with Latin and Greek. She had some skill in drawing, and was exceptionally expert at fine embroidery in silk and gold. She must have been able to read some Latin, or Alexander VI could never have left her to act as regent in the Vatican, as he did more

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than once ; but that her acquaintance with it was very slight may be presumed from the fact that on one occasion her father ordered a conference at which she was present to be conducted in the vulgar tongue because she was not mistress of the other. With Spanish and Italian she was equally familiar, for one was the habitual language of her father and brothers, the other that of the land of her birth. But when the biographer of the Chevalier Bayard says that she not only spoke Spanish, Italian, French, Greek and Latin, but also composed poetry in all these tongues, he must either have been misinformed or else was indulging in courtly exaggeration. Italian versification, and especially the composition of sonnets, was a common enough accomplishment of both sexes in her day ; but there is no evidence that it was practised by Lucrezia. On the contrary, it may be taken for certain that had she written verses of even the most mediocre kind they would have been highly eulogised by Bembo, or the Strozzi, or Aldus Manutius ; yet not one of these admirers and flatterers ever hints at such an accomplishment. Bembo does indeed give her a general intellectual testimonial ; for, in dedicating to her his *Asolani*, a philosophical dialogue on love, he addresses her as “ a Princess more desirous of ornamenting her mind with excellent endowments than her person with the decorations of dress.” Considering Lucrezia’s reputation as the most magnificently dressed woman in Italy, this might be considered pretty high praise, were we not compelled to make

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a heavy discount for an amorous admirer's flattery of a patronising Duchess.

Lucrezia's moral character is still a problem. Although the researches of modern historians have done something to modify the previously received estimate of her, the Roman period of her career remains veiled in great obscurity. That murderous mænad who is the heroine of Victor Hugo's play and Donizetti's opera no more resembles the historical personage whose name she bears than the ridiculous figures carried about our streets on the fifth of November resemble the real Guy Fawkes. At the same time there is no warrant whatever for the bold assertion of a recent Roman Catholic apologist that Lucrezia Borgia is now proved to have been a lady of lovely and unblemished character. The traditional account of her, which had been universally accepted ever since the publication of Guicciardini's History in 1561, was for the first time questioned by William Roscoe, who, in 1805, appended a dissertation on her character to his History of Leo X. In substance his plea amounts to no more than the contention that, as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots, it is impossible to credit such infamous charges as were made against Lucrezia concerning the earlier half of her life in face of the abundant and authentic testimony we possess that her conduct during the latter half of her life was not merely without reproach but in the highest degree commendable and exemplary.

This chivalrous breaking of a lance in her favour

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by the amiable Roscoe seems to have inspired a more extended vindication from the pen of William Gilbert, father of the well-known playwright, which appeared in the form of a biography in two volumes in 1869. Gilbert did not carry the matter much further; for the bulk of his book is devoted to a detailed account of Lucrezia's life in Ferrara. He quotes courtly poets and chroniclers as evidence of the estimation in which she was generally held, and cites her own letters, of which over three hundred are extant, to show that she was sedulous in her domestic duties, careful and discreet in matters of State, benevolent to the poor, and of a pious disposition approaching to bigotry. He does not profess to throw any new light on the period of her life in Rome; but, while admitting the unlikelihood that she could have resided for twenty years in the pernicious atmosphere of her father's court without being contaminated by it, merely declares that her detractors were too unscrupulous in their accusations.

Five years later, the learned German historian Ferdinand Gregorovius, who had devoted special attention to the political history of Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia in his "History of the City of Rome during the Middle Ages," produced an elaborate monograph on Lucrezia, based on an abundance of new material which he had discovered in the archives of the notary of the Capitol in Rome and elsewhere. He claims to have replaced romance by authentic history. But his verdict, which is sometimes spoken of as though

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it were a complete exculpation of Lucrezia from all the charges ever made against her, is in reality nothing of the kind. He absolves her from the absurd charge of complicity in the murder of her second husband, Alfonso of Bisceglia. He discredits the accusations of incest, as having no other foundation whatever than the divorced Giovanni Sforza's frantic and malignant efforts to retaliate on the family which had discarded and disinherited him. But he confesses himself unable to believe that Lucrezia could have kept herself spotless amidst the shocking depravity which surrounded her in Rome ; and he inclines to credit the Venetian ambassador's report that twelve months after her separation from her first husband she had given birth to an illegitimate child.

The charges of Lucrezia's accusers relate almost exclusively to the earlier half of her life in Rome ; the eulogies of her contemporary admirers relate exclusively to the latter half of her life in Ferrara. The former cannot be refuted, though they may be disbelieved ; and their evidence must be admitted to be of considerable weight. Not only satirical poets like Sannazzaro and Giovanni Botano, but Guicciardini, Machiavelli, and most of the principal statesmen and historians of the time were firmly convinced of some of the darkest charges made against her. Her modern apologists are scarcely justified in ruling the evidence of these men out of court merely because they were not actual eye-witnesses of the facts to which they testify. To say nothing of incest, how many

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murders have ever been proved by the evidence of actual eye-witnesses of the crime ? Guicciardini and Machiavelli were actors in the drama they describe. They were in constant personal contact with most of the other actors. They were not scandal-mongers, but it was their business to become acquainted with and to report the foibles and vices as well as the virtues of those with whom and concerning whom they were negotiating. They had access to all the best contemporary sources of information ; and they were familiar as the most profound historical student can never become familiar, with all the characters and all the conflicting thoughts and feelings and passions of the people of their time.

Her contemporary eulogists, who refer to the later period of her life in Ferrara only, were mostly enamoured poets or court dependents. Roscoe and Gilbert and Gregorovius all urge that Ariosto, the Strozzi and others would never have written as they did about Lucrezia if they had believed her guilty of such crimes as had been ascribed to her by Sannazzaro. But Ariosto, who lived nearly all his life in Ferrara, and who was a paid servant of Lucrezia's brother-in-law Ippolito, not only manufactured a fictitious pedigree for the Este family in his *Orlando Furioso*, but also flattered the living members of the family as unblushingly as the most venal of court rhymers. Ercole Strozzi called Lucrezia a Juno in good works, a Pallas in decorum, and a Venus in beauty. But it must be remembered that he also lavished the most fulsome eulogies on

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her bloodthirsty brother Cesare and on her infamous father Alexander VI. To urge that even court flatterers are bound to keep within the limits of probability because to ascribe to a prince such virtues as he notoriously lacked would only expose both prince and flatterer to ridicule, is an argument that cuts both ways. For it may be urged with equal cogency that to accuse a prince of such vices as were notoriously incompatible with his character would also have been a futile proceeding, and the obvious incredibility of the charges would only have recoiled upon the traducer. To disbelieve the story of a hideous crime because one's moral sense revolts against it, may be evidence of the biographer's amiable disposition, but is no exculpation of the accused person ; and one's moral sense revolts with no less strength against crimes imputed, for example, to the Cenci and the Malatesta, which yet have to be admitted for true. And it is scarcely more convincing to urge that the crimes charged against Lucrezia could not possibly be true of a woman with the "maidenly, almost childish face" depicted on the well-known medalion which is the only authentic portrait we have of her. Unfortunately, both history and common observation show only too conclusively that a charming face and fascinating manner are by no means infallible indications of a beautiful and virtuous character.

That the record of Lucrezia's later life in Ferrara refutes the scandalous stories of her earlier life in Rome seems to be the main contention alike



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of Roscoe and Gilbert and Gregorovius. But on this point the last of these, at least, is somewhat contradictory ; for after quoting Paolo Giovio to the effect that she put aside the pomps and vanities of the world to which she had been accustomed and devoted herself entirely to pious works, he discounts the praise by remarking that bigotry is often only the last form assumed by feminine vanity, and by pointing out that her own mother, Vanozza, became a religious fanatic, fancying that she expiated her former sins and purchased a place in Heaven with silver and gold ; that her licentious sister-in-law, Sancia, ended her scandalous life in a convent ; and that, in all probability, the adulterous Giulia Farnese herself passed the closing years of her shameless existence in similar pious fashion.

Absolving Lucrezia from all charge of complicity in any of the murders perpetrated by her relations, and putting aside as unproven the charge of incest, all the available evidence goes to show that up to the time of her marriage to Alfonso d'Este, with all her joyous vivacity and singular charm, she was yet a mere vain, pleasure-loving, callous, characterless girl, content to be a puppet in the hands of her unscrupulous father and his terrible son. But her departure from that "sink of iniquity," as Lorenzo de' Medici termed the Eternal City, was undoubtedly a turning-point in her life. Her suggestive temperament readily took on the colour of a new environment. In the course of the three years immediately following, as wife of the heir-

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apparent to the duchy, she established herself firmly in the good graces both of her husband's family and of the people of Ferrara. And during the subsequent fourteen years of her life, as reigning Duchess, there is ample testimony that she retained the admiration, the respect, and the affection of them all.

## XI

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ALFONSO OF FERRARA survived Lucrezia fifteen years. Like our George II he so honoured his wife's memory that he would not marry again, but kept mistresses instead. His eldest son succeeded him as Ercole II in 1534. His second son, Ippolito became a cardinal, and flourished until 1572. Alessandro died in infancy. Francesco became Marquis of Marralombarda and died at the age of sixty-two in 1578. His only daughter, Elenora died a nun, in the Convent of Corpus Domini in 1575. The Este dynasty came to an end with the death of Lucrezia's grandson, Alfonso II, in 1597. The later history of Giuffré, Prince of Squillace, Alexander VI's youngest son by Vanozza, is unknown, but eventually, at some unascertained date, his principedom passed into the possession of the family of his eldest brother, Giovanni of Gandia. The mysterious "Infans Romanus," Giovanni Borgia, who for some technical ecclesiastical reason was first legitimised by Alexander VI as a son of Cesare, and then immediately acknowledged for a son of his own by an unnamed Roman spinster, sank into comparative obscurity. In 1501, when the child was three years of age, Alexander, who

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certainly provided for his bastards royally, created for him two dukedoms, Camerino, which Cesare had just stolen from the Varani, giving the title to one, and the city of Nepi, together with thirty-six other places, forming the other. But when Julius II succeeded to the Papal throne in 1503 the boy's titles and property were all confiscated. From 1505 to 1508, as we have seen, he was being educated at Bari in company with Lucrezia's son, Rodrigo, Duke of Bisceglia. Then he disappears from our ken for some nine years, until 1517, when, coming from Naples and being shipwrecked near Pesaro, he took up his abode for a short time at the court of Lucrezia in Ferrara. In 1518 he went off to seek his fortune at the Court of France, and we do not hear of him again for twelve years more, when he put in an appearance at Rome and instituted a suit for the recovery of the duchy of Camerino, then in the possession of a young girl who was heiress of the Varani family. It is satisfactory to know that he lost his suit and had to pay the costs, which, of course, was what he richly deserved. Nothing is known of his subsequent doings, but when he died at the age of forty-nine in 1547 his property, which was not very considerable, was divided amongst the surviving children of Lucrezia, of the Duke of Gandia, and of Cesare Borgia.

Cesare Borgia left only one legitimate child, a daughter named Eloise, who was twice married, first to Louis de la Tremouille, and secondly to Philippe de Bourbon, Comte de Busset. Cesare's

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widow, Charlotte d'Albret, Duchess of Valentinois, retired from the world, devoted herself to works of piety, and died in 1514. Two illegitimate children of Cesare's appear to have been taken care of by Lucrezia in Ferrara ; a son, Girolamo Borgia, who married a lady of the Ferrarese nobility, and a daughter, Camilla Lucrezia, who became a nun, and who at the time of her death in 1573 was Abbess of San Bernardino. There were probably more, but the only one of whom we find any mention is a priest, calling himself Don Luigi Borgia, who appeared at the Court of France in 1550 and obtained a hundred ducats from the King by way of recognition of Cesare Borgia's services to the French Crown.

A Roman branch of the House of Borgia which had been settled in Velletri from the time of Calixtus III, or earlier, produced a cardinal nearly three centuries after the death of Pope Alexander VI in the person of Stefano Borgia, who was born at Velletri in 1731. He was a learned ecclesiastic, much given to archæology and the collection of engraved gems, medals, manuscripts, and rare books, who was raised to the purple by Pius VI in 1789. One of his colleagues in the Sacred College was Prince Henry Benedict Stuart, grandson of our James II, who was driven from the English throne by the revolution of 1688. In 1788 Prince Charles Edward, the young Pretender, died, and his brother, the cardinal, who was then Vice-Chancellor of the Holy See, claimed to be by divine right the sovereign of the

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land of his ancestors. He made no attempt to enforce this claim, contenting himself with striking a medal bearing his effigy and surrounded by the legend: "Henry the Ninth, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, Cardinal-Bishop of Tusculum"; although, in his last will and testament, he was good enough to bequeath the sovereignty of these realms to Anna Maria of Orleans, daughter of Henrietta Stuart, who had married the Duke of Savoy. But in 1799 Cardinal Henry Benedict Stuart was in great need of money, owing to losses caused by the French Revolution, and his friend, Cardinal Stefano Borgia, by means of diplomatic negotiations with certain private acquaintances in England, was able to secure for the impecunious Stuart an income of £4000 per annum from the Privy Purse of George III. It is said that if this Cardinal Stefano Borgia had pleased to exert himself in the year 1800 he would undoubtedly have been elected to the Papal Chair. Had this happened, it would have fallen to the lot of a Borgia to consecrate Napoleon as Emperor in 1804, and also to have had his territories taken away from him in 1809 by that later adventurer, whose meteoric career, though on a vastly greater scale, bears much resemblance to that of Cesare Borgia.

Cardinal Stefano's brother, Gianpaolo Borgia, married the Countess Almena Baglioni-Malatesta of Perugia, heiress of two of the principal Romagnian families which had suffered so severely at the hands of Cesare Borgia. The Borgia have

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always been remarkably prolific, and Gianpaolo kept up the family tradition by producing eighteen children. The youngest of these, Francesco, who was born in 1794, by a second marriage in 1822 established his house in Milan, where it is now represented by his grandson, Count Francesco Borgia.

It is rather strange that Giovanni, the murdered Duke of Gandia, should be the only one of Pope Alexander's children to found a family, but it is far more strange that from this luxury-loving and libidinous race there should spring, in the person of Pope Alexander's great-grandson Francesco, an ascetic saint, celebrated throughout Christendom as "the most illustrious of all conquerors of the appetites and passions of our common nature." The murdered Duke left two children, a son named Juan and a daughter named Isabella. Their mother married again, but after being left a widow for the second time she became a nun. Her daughter soon followed her example and also became a nun in the same convent. But her son, Don Juan, had two wives (successively of course) and no less than fourteen children. It was a prosperous family, for of the six daughters four married nobles and grandees of Spain, and two, who remained unmarried, entered the Church and became Lady Abbesses, whilst of the eight sons two became cardinals, two viceroys, one an archbishop, one an abbot, one died young, and one became General of the Order of Jesus, and was ultimately placed

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by Pope Clement XI in the Calendar of the Saints.

Don Juan, third Duke of Gandia, was noted for his piety and virtue, and his first wife, Doña Maria of Aragon, a grand-daughter of Ferdinand the Catholic and therefore cousin to the Emperor Charles V, was a model Christian matron. Their eldest son, Francesco, who was born on October 28, 1510, only seven years after the death of his infamous great-grandfather, consequently grew up in an atmosphere of piety. The first words he tried to pronounce were Jesus, Mary, God. At a very early age he showed great facility in repeating the sermons he had heard, and one day he gathered his friends together and preached to them from a pulpit of his own construction in so impressive a manner that his hearers believed him to be inspired by the Holy Ghost. Even his pious mother thought he went too far and devoted himself too much to religious matters. She told him that when she had asked God for a son she had wanted a duke, not a monk, and suggested that instead of confining his interests to the hearing of sermons and the collecting of pictures of saints, he ought to be learning how to manage a sword and a horse. Probably there was some other secret influence in the household encouraging him to persevere in his devotions, for it is recorded that when his mother died in 1520 this precociously pious child of ten retired to one of the turrets of the Castle of Gandia and "used the discipline," that is to say, scourged himself severely.



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In 1523, at the age of thirteen, young Don Francesco de Borja went as page of honour to the Infanta Doña Catalina, the Emperor's sister, at Tordesillas, where he became a great favourite amongst the ladies. When Doña Catalina was married, two years later, to the King of Portugal, Francesco's father, who was much troubled by the boy's hankering after a religious life, sent him to complete his education under the eye of his maternal uncle, Don Juan of Aragon, Archbishop of Saragossa. The uncle seems to have been much of the father's way of thinking, and saw to it that rhetoric and philosophy and theology were duly alternated with lessons from the riding-master and proper practice in all the accomplishments of a young cavalier. One of his earliest biographers, Cardinal Cien-Fuegos, relates that one day, when the young nobleman was seventeen or eighteen years of age, he happened to be slowly riding along the principal street of Alcala, when his attention was attracted by a poorly clad man who was being led to prison by the guards of the Vicar-General. The man looked up at the splendid young hidalgo ; their eyes met ; and thus, with a single glance, declares the cardinal, Ignatius Loyola took possession of the soul of Francesco Borja. If so, Francesco was blissfully unconscious of the momentous fact, and rode on his way unthinking and undisturbed.

In 1528 the Duke of Gandia removed his eldest son and heir to Madrid, where he soon became one of the brightest ornaments of the Court of

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his cousin Charles V. Both the Emperor and Empress showed great partiality for him and treated him almost as if he were a son. He is described as tall, graceful, and dignified, with a high forehead, an aquiline nose, a small mouth, a delicate, bright-coloured complexion, grey, almond-shaped eyes, and curly brown hair. Under the care of the good worldly-wise Archbishop of Saragossa he had become a proficient in all knightly exercises. He could master intractable horses that would allow nobody else to ride them, his strength and skill obtained prizes both in the bull-ring and the tournament, there was no keener sportsman amongst the train who went out hunting with the Emperor, and he was a special adept in falconry. He was also a cultivated musician, composing music as well as playing on several instruments, and he was a lively conversationist. But beneath all this his aspirations towards the monastic life persisted with undiminished ardour. In after years, the saint referred to this period as his life of vanity and sin; but nobody else would have so described it. He refused to join in the gambling which was one of the principal amusements of the court, he assembled his household every evening for prayers, and his valet testified that on all occasions of special temptation he wore a hair shirt. Whilst following his quarry in the hunting field, or receiving a prize from the Queen of Beauty in the tournament, he might well have said with the Sir Galahad of Arthur's Court :

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*More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.*

In 1529 the young man became enamoured of one of the Empress's maids of honour, Eleanora de Castro, a lady remarkable both for her beauty and her piety. His father was averse to the match, deeming nothing less than a princess of the royal house of Aragon a suitable bride for the future Duke of Gandia. But the Emperor and Empress favoured the young couple, and the father was induced to give his consent. Francesco was accordingly married at the age of nineteen, and immediately afterwards the Emperor created him Marquis of Lombay.

In 1531 Pope Clement VII issued a Bull granting a number of special privileges to the House of Borja by way of reward for the Duke of Gandia's services to the Holy See. Power was conferred on any confessor they might select to absolve them from the gravest ecclesiastical censures or penalties ; to commute the fasts of the Church into almsgiving ; and, once in a year, to absolve them from any oath or vow ; all cases, it appears, usually reserved for the decision of the Pope himself. They were granted special indulgences for the hour of death ; and for every visit to a church or an altar, and for every Mass celebrated by a duly qualified member of the family indulgences equal to those of certain altars in Rome. They received

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permission to eat meat in Lent, on other fasts when it is forbidden, and on Saturdays, such permission to extend also to their guests and servants. They were privileged to receive the Sacraments, if necessary, within prohibited times, and members of their household might be buried any day in the year, Easter Day alone excepted. Priests of the House of Borja received permission to recite the Breviary when they pleased, without observation of fixed hours, and to recite it all at once or divide it at their pleasure. And ladies of the House of Borja were to be at liberty to enter any enclosure of nuns once a month, to converse and to eat with the inmates, although not to remain for the night. Considering the reputation both of the Duke of Gandia and of his eldest son for quite remarkable piety and punctilious observance of all the rites and ceremonies of their Church, the reason for some of these special privileges is not very apparent, at least to the uninitiated.

In 1535, Francesco, now Marquis of Lombay, accompanied Charles V on a visit to Portugal and afterwards on a campaign in Africa, where he so distinguished himself that the Emperor declared he would become one of the first generals of his time—an innocent remark in which one of his Jesuit biographers discovers an unconscious prophecy. In the course of this campaign Francesco contracted an intermittent fever, which racked him severely, and set him reflecting on the tortures of Purgatory. During his con-

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valescence he read, or had read to him, spiritual books and lives of the saints. In the following year he accompanied the Emperor on a campaign in Provence, and once more distinguished himself as a soldier. Then, for the greater part of two years, he remained quietly at home.

In 1539 occurred an event which profoundly affected the tenor of his life. At Toledo, on May 1, in the midst of the brilliant festivals in celebration of the Emperor's victories, the Empress suddenly sickened and died. The Marquis and Marchioness of Lombay, who were there in attendance as lord and lady-in-waiting, were ordered to accompany the body to Granada, where it was to be interred in the sepulchre of the kings of Spain. Francesco had cherished an almost filial affection for the Empress, and as the burial could not take place until the coffin had been opened at Granada and some grandee of the highest rank had testified on oath that he recognised therein the mortal remains of his deceased Empress, that office had been entrusted to him. The journey occupied five or six days, during which time Francesco never left the coffin, lying down beside it on the pavement of the various churches where it was necessary to rest by the way. It was in the state of mind induced by this trying vigil that he experienced the first of the supernatural visions with which he became more familiar in after life. As the mournful procession entered the gates of Granada his grandmother (who had died two years previously in her convent) appeared to him, accompanied by

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a number of angels and surrounded by a shining light, to tell him the time had arrived for him to walk in the way that God had ordained for him.

On May 7 the Imperial coffin was opened, in presence of the clergy and all the principal officials of the city, in order that the Marquis of Lombay might take oath in the prescribed form that he recognised the corpse therein as that of his sovereign lady, the Empress Isabella. But, to the horror of everybody present, decomposition had set in so rapidly that identification was impossible. He was unable, of course, to make the prescribed oath, but a fresh one was drawn up, and the Marquis swore that he had never allowed the coffin out of his sight, by night or day, since it left Toledo. Profoundly affected, Francesco turned away from the ghastly sight to pray and scourge himself in private until the time for the funeral arrived. When that took place two days later the preacher, an eloquent man, delivered so impressive a discourse on the text "All flesh is grass," that Francesco then made a vow that if he should survive his wife he would enter some religious Order so that he might devote himself entirely to the service of a Master who had triumphed over death.

From this time forth everybody could see that Don Francesco was a changed man. But when shortly afterwards he requested permission to retire from court into private life the Emperor would not hear of it. Charles probably thought the occupations of an active career would soon dis-

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sipate his young cousin's morbid musings, and, after decorating him with the Cross of St. James of Compostella, then the most highly prized of all chivalric honours, appointed him Viceroy of Cateluna, a province that then required a firm hand to reduce it to order. Accordingly, towards the end of November 1539, the Marquis and Marchioness of Lombay took up their residence at the Viceregal Palace in Barcelona. He was well fitted for the post, being by all accounts at the age of twenty-nine an accomplished statesman, a prudent diplomatist, an able soldier, and a finished man of the world. His administration was admittedly a complete success. During his reign (1539-1543) it was said that "malice and wickedness were banished, whilst justice, prudence, and temperance prevailed." His first business was to extirpate the brigands who infested the country, and he did it with vigour; but it must have been a strange experience for the Barcelona officials to have a viceroy who could not bring himself to sign the death-warrants of these miscreants until he had spent some hours in prayer, and who had Masses said for the repose of the criminal's souls after they had been duly executed. Bribery was abolished in the courts of law, and justice made equally available for both rich and poor. Foul or blasphemous language in the streets was punished by fine. And education, both spiritual and secular, was sedulously cared for throughout the whole province. He said afterwards that this vice-royalty had been a good

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apprenticeship to fit him for General of the Jesuits ; it had taught him how to decide important questions, to settle rival claims, to adjust differences, and to enter into both sides of a question.

It also gave him an opportunity of showing that even a viceroy may be in the world and yet not of it. As representative of his Sovereign it was necessary for him to give sumptuous banquets, but whilst his guests were regaled with the choicest of viands and of wines, the viceroy himself dined off a single dish of vegetables with two or three slices of bread, and drank nothing but water. He dispensed with the services of a valet, spent from four to six hours in meditation and prayer nightly, and scourged himself so severely three times a week that the walls of his room were bespattered with blood.

In January 1543 his father died, and Francesco, having become Duke of Gandia, obtained permission to give up his vice-royalty in order to be able to attend to the affairs of his own duchy and other numerous estates both in Spain and Naples. The next three years were passed quietly at Gandia with his wife and eight children. His first public act was to rebuild and enlarge the hospital, and he afterwards founded and endowed colleges and convents and schools and other benevolent institutions for the benefit of his vassals. His children were brought up to consider themselves but stewards of their wealth, and he gave them large sums of money to distribute in charity according to their own discretion. Whenever the Holy



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Viaticum was carried to a sick person it was always the Duke's custom to accompany the priests on foot, even although the distance were several miles. He had put down the haughty spirit and pride of birth which he believed to have been in earlier life one of his besetting sins. And he had learned to deny himself, to an extent that astonished his friends, not only of every enjoyment that the most ascetic moralist could consider unlawful, but of much that was quite lawful as well as perfectly harmless.

And now a severer trial awaited him. Towards the end of 1545 the sweet, gentle, pious wife who had been his beloved and worthy helpmate in all good works for seventeen years, lay dangerously ill, and the Duke knelt praying for her recovery in his oratory. After he had poured forth his supplications for a long time, the figure on the crucifix above the altar seemed to speak to him, and it said: "If thou really desirest longer life for the Duchess I will grant it, but I warn thee it will not be well." It was a terrible decision to be compelled to make, but to the Duke of Gandia the Court of Heaven was as real as the Court of Madrid, and he had no more doubt that his wife was destined to shine for evermore in the former than that she had shone for a brief period in the latter. His answer, which he repeated to his confessor afterwards, was given at great length, but the substance of it was: "Not my will, but Thine be done." After hanging for a week or two between life and death the Duchess died, in

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January 1546. To the day of his own death, twenty-six years afterwards, Francesco firmly believed in the reality of the divine voice from the crucifix in his oratory.

Whilst the Castle of Gandia was still hung with its mourning draperies, Father Peter Faber arrived there with a message from Ignatius Loyola. Francesco had heard of Loyola some three or four years previously, during his vice-royalty, when Father Anthony Araoz had paid a visit to Barcelona. He had been much impressed by what he had heard, and had corresponded with and sought advice from Loyola ever since. Now the founder of the Society of Jesus desired him to establish a Jesuit College in Gandia, which, of course, he set about doing with great ardour and liberality. Father Faber had also brought with him the Master's book of "Spiritual Exercises," which the Duke of Gandia began to study with great earnestness. The Society of Jesus, then in its infancy, though poor and little known, and with every one of its members under vow never to accept any ecclesiastical dignity, had already aroused considerable hatred, but the Duke of Gandia was the type of man to whom its rule of life made a strong appeal. Doubtless he had many discussions on the subject with Father Texeda, his confessor, and plainly showed how his inclinations lay. However this may be, one morning Father Texeda had a vision in which the Blessed Virgin appeared and directed him to tell the Duke it was her wish that he should enter the Society of Jesus in order

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to be of greater service to the Church. The Duke was overwhelmed with confusion to find one so unworthy as himself singled out for special notice by the Blessed Virgin, and, as his habit was, retired to his oratory to pray. Whilst on his knees before a statue of the Madonna, the image spoke to him, saying: "Francesco, hesitate no longer; enter the Society of my Son." Of course Francesco hesitated no longer, and of course Ignatius Loyola did not hesitate to receive him. But the founder of the Jesuits was too wise to grant admission to his Order instantly on application. The Duke was advised to keep even his intention secret until he had chosen a suitable wife for his eldest son, settled the rest of his children under satisfactory guardianship, and completed the buildings which he then had in hand. Moreover, he was enjoined to apply himself to the systematic study of theology, in order that he might take a doctor's degree before his entry into the Society. The Duke did as he was bid; in fact, from this time forth he regarded Ignatius Loyola as his religious superior, whose voice was as the voice of God.

In 1547, whilst Charles V was absent in Italy, his son Philip, as Regent, convoked an assembly of the Cortes, at which the Duke of Gandia was obliged to be present. The Regent, who admired Gandia no less than his father did, was bent on retaining him at court, and pressed him to accept the office of Grand Master of the Royal Household. The Duke declined, and got away to his home as

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soon as practicable, but in order to escape being compelled to accept some high secular office under the Emperor he implored Ignatius Loyola to allow him to make his profession at once. Loyola, of course, had no intention of losing his illustrious proselyte, and so towards the end of the year a Papal Brief was procured permitting him to take the irrevocable vows without any public acknowledgment, and to remain in the world four years afterwards in order to arrange his affairs and provide for the future of his children. Ignatius now regulated the actions of his somewhat too enthusiastically ascetic convert. The Duke was ordered to moderate his austerities, to relax his excessive fasting, and to use for study some of the time he was in the habit of devoting to meditation and prayer. Borja was told that he had gone too far in weakening his digestion and reducing his physical strength; he must therefore change his regimen, and be content to inflict upon his body only that amount of suffering which was necessary to render it subservient to the spirit. But the Duke could never be persuaded to lie down to rest until he had made reparation for the sins of the day by some penance and mortification, and he now discontinued the use of a bed, lying down to sleep on the steps of an alcove in his room which were covered with an ordinary carpet. By the end of 1549 he had taken his doctor's degree, and having also married his eldest son and two of his daughters, provided his other children with trustworthy guardians, finished the

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erection of his public buildings, and pensioned his aged and infirm servants, he was ready to make his formal entry into the brotherhood.

As Julius III, a stranger to him, had now succeeded Paul III, a friend of his family, in the Papal Chair, Francesco had less fear of opposition to his designs; and on August 31, 1550, he set out for Rome. As he rode out of the gate of his city he turned for one last look at the towers and battlements of the castle of his fathers, and then, setting his face straight forward, passed out into the open country chanting the hundred and fourteenth Psalm: "When Israel went out of Egypt, and the House of Jacob from a strange people." The honour and ceremony with which his relatives, Duke Alfonso of Ferrara and Duke Cosimo de' Medici, insisted on entertaining him were repugnant to his spirit and necessitated extra humiliation. One night at an inn a disturbed page got out of bed and went to the door of his master's room. The Duke was "taking the discipline." In the silence of the night the youth heard every blow as it fell, and, after counting up to five hundred, crept in awestruck silence away. Francesco then wrote to Ignatius Loyola that he proposed to enter Rome by night in order to avoid any public ceremony. But Ignatius knew better the propagandist value of such things. He informed Borja that it would be impossible to decline a public reception without offending many estimable persons, and that his interior repugnance in submitting to it would gain him all the merit

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of humility, as well as those also of obedience and charity. Consequently the illustrious convert was met by the ambassador of Spain, together with many cardinals and princes and nobles, who, attended by their large retinues, conducted him in solemn procession to the doors of the Jesuit House. The Pope invited him to stay as a guest in the Vatican, but he humbly begged to be excused. All the cardinals and prelates then in Rome called upon him, and he was obliged to return their visits, but he kept himself as secluded as possible, and under Loyola's direction devoted the remains of his fortune to the establishment of the Jesuit college *de Propaganda Fide* which afterwards became so famous in Rome.

The consent of the Emperor was necessary before he could divest himself of his rank and titles, and on January 15, 1551, he wrote to Charles V earnestly begging permission to lay them down. But whilst he awaited an answer, intelligence leaked out that it was the intention of Pope Julius III to command his acceptance of a cardinal's hat. To avoid the offer of this, Gandia fled back from Rome to Spain, and, after making a pilgrimage to the Castle of Loyola, the home of the family of his revered superior, he buried himself in the recently established Jesuit college at Oñate to await the decision of the Emperor. Charles's answer arrived on February 12, giving the required permission with great regret, and shrewdly intimating that such a strange example would find more admirers than imitators. The

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proper legal processes were at once drawn up, all his titles, all his worldly goods, all his territorial rights, were solemnly renounced, and the sometime Duke of Gandia, with beard shaved off, tonsured, and clad in the humble habit of his Order, was no longer a noble, a knight, or even a Spanish gentleman, but plain Father Francisco, S.J.

Having made careful preparation for Holy Orders Francisco was ordained priest by the Bishop of Calahorra on Saturday in Whitsun week, 1551. The fame of his extraordinary piety had spread far and wide, so that when he said his first public Mass on November 15 in the principal church of Vergara, that large building was found all too small for the vast crowd that flocked to the place, and an altar had to be set up in the open country outside the walls of the town, where he celebrated from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon. We are told by some of his biographers that he was endowed with the gift of tongues, for not only did the sound of his voice penetrate further than was humanly possible, but each one of the vast crowd composed of divers nationalities, including the Basque, heard the discourse in his own native language. The Duke of Gandia had been called "the modern Nareissus," and compared to Apollo for his physical beauty, but all this had now disappeared, and Father Francisco at the age of forty-one, thin, emaciated, his eyes dimmed by vigils and weeping, his scanty hair streaked with grey, and his fine complexion replaced by a waxen pallor, looked twenty years

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older than he really was. Yet he had a sweet expression, a winning charm of manner, a pleasing voice, a ready flow of language, a fund of apt illustration, the fierce intensity of the fanatic, and at the same time all the grace and dignity of the Spanish hidalgo. His sermons are said to have been admirable compositions in themselves, but even though they had been destitute of any of the graces of oratory, they would undoubtedly have produced a powerful effect as the earnest utterances of a man of conspicuous piety who was known to practise what he preached.

Most of his preaching was done during his residence at Oñate from 1551 to 1554, but the life there included other duties than preaching. His superior, evidently thinking that a Spanish grandee would need a great deal more humiliation than he had voluntarily bestowed upon himself, set him to do a disproportionate amount of laborious menial labour. He was told off to assist in digging the foundations of a new wing of the house, to help the masons in sawing and carrying stone, to wheel manure and distribute it over the vegetable garden, and indoors he was set to chop wood, light fires, and help the cook by washing up plates and dishes. He did all this quite obediently and cheerfully, without the slightest complaint; but when Ignatius Loyola heard of it, and found that it had permanently weakened the already exhausted body of Francisco, he promptly put a stop to such severity. But Francisco continued to practise gratuitous mortifications upon himself. He was



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in the habit of making excursions amongst the surrounding villages, with a wallet on his shoulders, to solicit alms. When given dry crusts and other waste matter, he would ask leave to eat of these for his dinner instead of a fresh-cut slice from the loaf. He put sand, cinders, and pebbles into his shoes. He patched and darned his garments with his own hands. He slept in his day clothes on straw upon the floor; and he frequently pierced his flesh with a sharp-pointed instrument. He refused to have anything to do with money, so that before his death he had lost all knowledge of the relative value of different coins. People insisted on speaking of him as "the Holy Duke," but he would never permit himself to be called by any title, and if letters came to him so addressed he would return them, endorsed, "Not for me. Francisco, S.J."

In 1552 Ignatius Loyola commanded him to leave his retreat at Oñate from time to time in order to seek persons desirous of serving God and helping them to set their households in order. In this way he went on a visit to the Viceroy of Navarre at Pamplona, and afterwards spent some months in evangelising expeditions in Castile and Andalusia. Then he received an urgent invitation to visit the Court of Juan III of Portugal, to whose wife Catalina, it will be remembered, he had been page of honour when a boy. Both the King and the Queen sent a nobleman of high rank to meet him at the frontier and escort him to Lisbon. When he approached the capital the

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Bishop of Lisbon and the Papal Nuncio, with many dukes, marquises, and other great lords, rode out to receive him ceremoniously, and when he appeared in the doorway of the audience chamber, the King uncovered his head, and both King and Queen, rising from their thrones, advanced to meet him. The whole court, we are told, profited greatly by his teaching and example during this visit; but his own poor body probably suffered severely in the privacy of his chamber to counterbalance the effect on himself of all this deference and honour.

Father Francisco's residence at Oñate came to an end in October 1554, when he was appointed Commissary-General of the Society. As this promotion gave him greater freedom, and as the first use he made of that freedom was to increase his penances and mortifications, Ignatius Loyola appointed a superior who was to overrule Francisco in all matters relating to bodily health. Francisco was an admirable recruiting-sergeant, and founded a large number of Jesuit colleges in Spain and Portugal. No one ever did more to inculcate and diffuse devotion to the Blessed Virgin, by sermons and exhortations, by distributing pictures of her throughout the land, and by establishing confraternities of her name. There was not a shrine of Our Lady in Europe, it was said, at which Francisco had not offered a lamp. Though abnormally strict and severe towards himself, he sternly rebuked those who were wanting in charity and consideration for those placed under their charge.

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He was the first to establish the Noviciates of the Society, and in dealing with these his diplomatic training stood him in good stead. His example had attracted a number of grandees and nobles who were not all endowed with his patience and ascetic enthusiasm. But he never got rid of a novice whom he judged capable of being made into a good Jesuit. One young nobleman could not do without a valet. Father Francisco immediately found a novice who had been a valet before his entrance into the Society, and appointed him to wait upon the helpless young gentleman. But after a few weeks he became ashamed of being the only one thus waited upon and begged to be allowed to do without such assistance. Another requested permission to go out into the world again because he could not bear the suffocating atmosphere of the little room in which the novices slept, and could not exist without a change of linen every day. Father Francisco suavely acknowledged how trying it must be, and immediately ordered the provision of an abundance of linen and a separate large room. Before many days were over this novice also became ashamed of his exclusive privileges, and humbly begged to wear the poorest attire and to be lodged in the most uncomfortable dormitory.

In 1555 Francisco once more had some trouble to avoid being raised to the purple. The Emperor and Pope Julius III had agreed together that this saintly Borja must be made a cardinal. Ignatius Loyola no sooner heard of the threatened calamity

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than he hastened to the Pope to protest against it on the ground of the injury it would do to the Society of Jesus. Julius, who had no wish to injure the Society, which he had always hitherto supported and favoured, was in a difficulty because he had pledged his word to the Emperor. Ignatius therefore suggested that his Holiness should make the offer to Father Francisco without *commanding* him to accept it, and, this being done, Francisco was able to decline the proffered honour. In July 1556 the great Ignatius Loyola died, and was succeeded in the Generalship of the Society by Father Iago Laynez. Shortly afterwards the Emperor Charles V abdicated and retired to the monastery of St. Just; when, having been prejudiced against the Jesuits by some of their inveterate enemies, he wrote to Father Francisco to visit him, without, however, informing his cousin that he had made up his mind to suppress the Society throughout Spain. In the course of three or four days' intimate conversation, the saint was able to remove the unfavourable impression that had been made on Charles's mind, and the threatened suppression did not take place. A year later, Charles, on his deathbed, summoned Francisco to him again, but the priest only arrived in time to preach his old sovereign's funeral sermon.

In the summer of 1557 Francisco had been dangerously ill whilst travelling about his evangelising work. In 1559 he lay ill of fever for some months at Evora and at Lisbon. In 1560 he suffered severely from neuralgia, lost the use



*St. Francisco de Borja.*



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of his limbs, and seemed threatened with paralysis ; when these symptoms disappeared, he was afflicted with ulcerous sores in various parts of his body. But he seems to have been in much better health in 1561, when he was summoned to Rome and appointed Vicar-General of his Order. When he preached in the church chiefly attended by the Spaniards in Rome the congregation usually included a number of cardinals, ambassadors, and Roman nobles, and although he always spoke in Castilian we are assured that even those who did not understand a word of that language were greatly edified. He was now generally regarded as a saint and spoken of as *el Beato*, and already he had been credited with the performance of a number of miracles. Some people saw rays of light emanating from his body when he officiated at the altar, and some testified that they had seen him raised a considerable distance from the ground. One or two of the stories are credible enough, and scarcely require a supernatural explanation ; the following, for example. Many of the Jesuit Houses which he founded remained for some time very poorly endowed. One fine summer's day he arrived about noon at the College of St. Andrew in Valladolid, when he learned that there was only a small quantity of bread in the house and no money. He immediately retired to the chapel to pray, as his custom was, and when he came out he ordered the bell to be rung for dinner as usual. When all were assembled he said grace and desired the Rector to distribute

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equal portions of the two small loaves amongst the company. Hardly had this been done when there was a loud ringing of the door-bell, and on opening the door the porter beheld an old man of majestic appearance accompanied by a youth of surpassing beauty. The young man presented a large basket containing meat, fish, eggs, bread, and wine, and the old man handed to the porter a purse filled with money. The mysterious benefactors would not give any name nor were they ever seen again, wherefore the Rector and his brethren devoutly believed them to be angels who had been sent in answer to the prayer of Saint Francisco.

But some of the stories which are related in all good faith by his Jesuit biographers will perhaps be accepted for true by few persons outside the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. Father Francisco always carried about with him a piece of the true Cross, which had been given him by Charles V. Once, when the Princess Joanna, daughter of the Emperor, was ill, Francisco dipped this relic into a glass of water, which instantly became red, as if mixed with blood. This incarnadined water was given to the sick Princess to drink, and she recovered. A lady who also possessed a piece of the true Cross was much disturbed by having the genuineness of her relic questioned, and consulted Father Francisco on the matter. He not only pronounced for its genuineness at a glance, but proceeded to demonstrate the fact to all and sundry. Taking it up



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reverently in his fingers he broke the wood into two pieces, when from each portion there fell several drops of blood which stained the linen in which it had been wrapped. Francisco was once travelling in company with a Jesuit father who had a great reputation as an eloquent preacher. One evening, as they rested at an inn, two of the preacher's front teeth were knocked out by some unparticularised accident, and the poor man was greatly grieved to think that his usefulness in the pulpit was ruined at a blow. But Father Francisco picked up the fallen teeth, slipped them back into their bleeding sockets, and there they remained for the remainder of the preacher's life, as neither old age nor decay had any effect upon them afterwards.

In January 1565 Father Iago Laynez died and Father Francisco de Borja was chosen General of the Society of Jesus. The history of the remaining seven years of his life is merged in that of the powerful Order to which he belonged. His biographer Verjus says that St. Ignatius designed it and laid its foundations, Father Laynez built the walls, and St. Francisco de Borja roofed it in and completed all its interior arrangements. The Roman college owed both its origin and its celebrity to him, and all succeeding ones have been shaped according to his model. His influence was enormous, and the spread of the Society under his rule is said by its historians to have been literally "miraculous." When Pius V ascended the Papal throne in 1566 he did not wait for Father Francisco to call upon him, but stopped his coronation

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procession on its way to the Lateran in order that he might pay his respects to the Jesuit General. Pius V maintained a close association with General Francisco de Borja. He employed Jesuits to preach before himself and his cardinals, to attend to the morals of his palace guards, to preach to the *hetairæ*, and to convert the Jews.

In 1570 the Pope sent Francisco on a mission to Spain and Portugal in company with his own nephew, Cardinal Alessandrino, and a number of prelates, six of whom afterwards became cardinals. The General of the Jesuits was welcomed with great delight in Barcelona, where twenty years previously he had been beloved as viceroy. When he crossed the frontiers of Valencia, his eldest son, now Carlos Duke of Gandia, with other relatives and many neighbouring nobles, came to meet him. They alighted from their horses and kissed his feet, imploring him to visit his family domain of Gandia. But he refused, sending them away as soon as he could to pay their respects to the Pope's legate, whilst he continued his journey by another road. A great crowd came to welcome him in Valencia, and he was received with equal honour in Madrid and in Lisbon. It then became necessary for him to pay a visit to the French Court at Blois. But travelling during the severe winter weather told upon him heavily, and in February 1572, what proved to be his last illness began to show itself. He travelled by easy stages back towards Rome. The Duke of Savoy sent physicians to attend upon him. His nephew,

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Alfonso II, detained him at Ferrara, waited upon him as if he had been his own father, and sent him on his way in a royal litter. He reached Rome on October 28, and three days after "full of joy at the thought of quitting this world" he died. In 1617 his remains were removed from their resting-place in Rome to a chapel of his Order in Madrid. In 1623 an Apostolic Commission reported that the miracles ascribed to him had been fully verified. In 1654 Urban VIII issued a Bull of Beatification, and in 1671 Clement XI solemnly proclaimed his canonisation. In 1680 his relics were transferred to a gorgeous church in Madrid built by the Duke of Lerma in memory of his ancestor.

It is a relief to be able to say of a Borgia, whether we agree with his ascetic ideal or not, that he was honourable, just, and virtuous, devoted to the interests of his fellow men and careless of his own. Nepotism was one of the most pronounced hereditary failings of the family, and when this passion came to be exercised, without let or hindrance, by persons in the position of Calixtus III and Alexander VI it was productive of far-reaching disastrous results. But Francisco de Borja had conquered this failing, as he had conquered every other feeling which he conceived to be a failing. As nothing could stand out in stronger contrast with the conduct of those representatives of the family who occupied the Papal throne, one or two examples may be given. When a dispute about some property occurred between Francisco's son, Duke Carlos of Gandia, and the Admiral of Aragon,

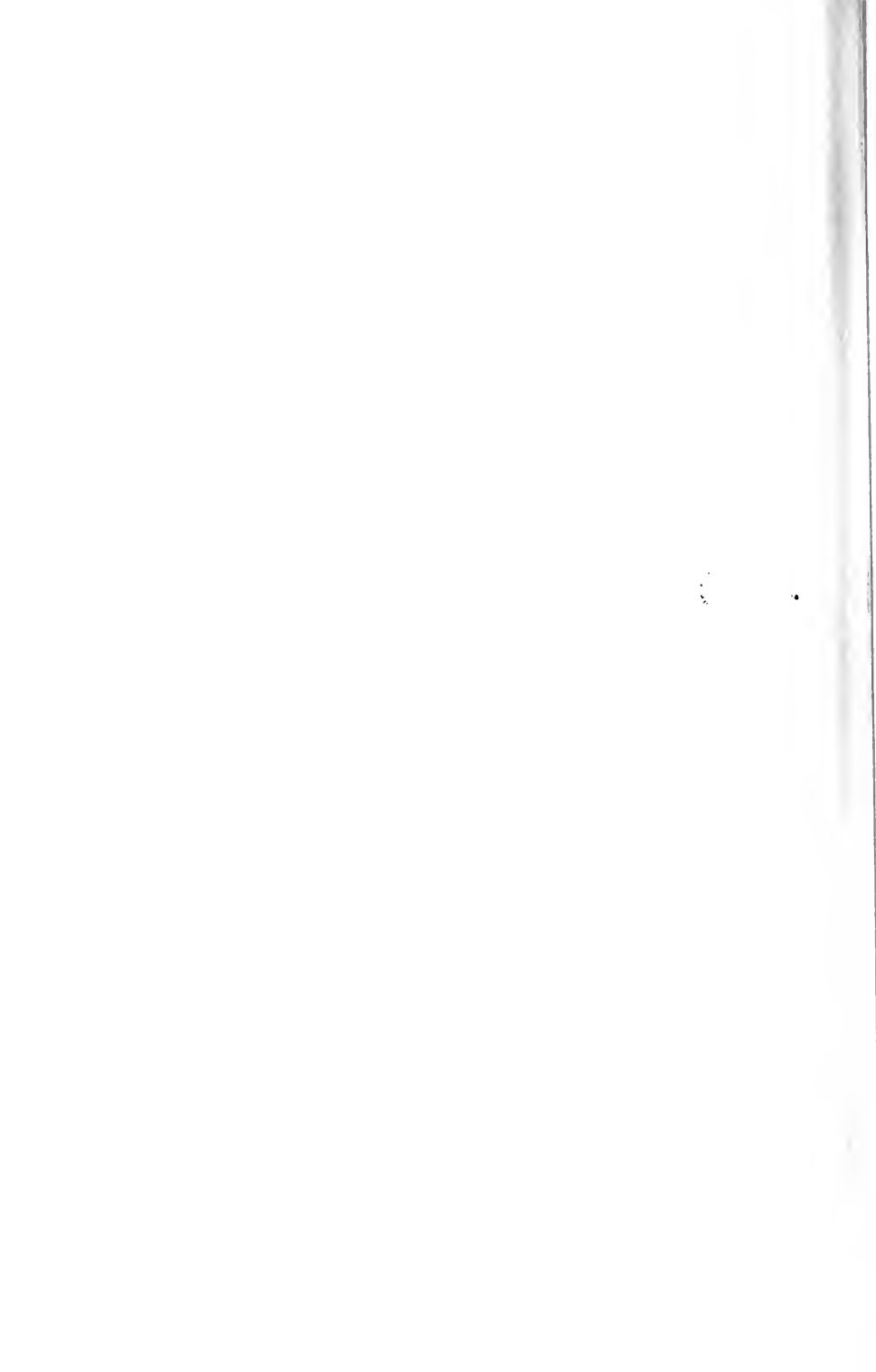
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the Emperor asked Father Francisco what he would wish him to do in the matter. Francisco, without going into the merits of the case, pleaded for strict justice, but, in case it were a matter in which favour must be shown to one side or the other, he begged that it might be shown not to his own son but to the Admiral, who, he believed, needed it more. On another occasion, Francisco's third son, Alvarez, needed a Papal dispensation to enable him to make a brilliant marriage. Nothing was done in the matter for sometime until Pius V happened to discover accidentally that the young man on whose behalf the dispensation was asked was a son of the Jesuit General, whom he held in such high esteem. He then expressed his surprise that Francisco had never approached him on the subject. Father Francisco replied that he had received many importunities to plead with his Holiness, but had said nothing because he believed that the Pope would grant the dispensation without any interference if he judged it to be for the good of the persons concerned and for the glory of God. But now the matter had been broached he would say this much : if it appeared to his Holiness in any way inexpedient, he hoped the dispensation would *not* be given, as he had more at heart the interests of the Holy See than the advantage of his own children.

None of these children ever became known beyond the limits of their native land. A great-grandson of the saint, named Gaspar de Borja, became a cardinal in 1611 at the age of twenty-two.

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After acting as Viceroy in Naples, he is said to have aspired to the Papacy, but he died in 1645 at the age of fifty-six, disappointed of this supreme dignity. A great-great-grandson of the saint, named after him Francisco, a man of piety and learning, became a cardinal in 1700 and died two years afterwards. The last of the descendants of Giovanni Borgia, the murdered son of Pope Alexander VI and Vanozza de Catenai, died without issue as recently as 1882, when the line became extinct. Corvo, in his "Chronicles of the House of Borgia," quoting from *El Blason de España*, tells us that he was ten times grandee of Spain of the First Class, decorated with the Golden Fleece and numerous other knightly orders, possessed of three Principalities, seven Dukedoms, ten Marquisates, fourteen Countships, and one Viscounty; and we are assured that his name was: "Don Marino Tellez-Giron y Beaufort Spontin Pimental de Quiñones Fernandes de Velasco y Herrera Diego Lopez de Zuñiga Perez de Guzman Sotomayor Mendoza Maza Ladron de Lizana Carroz y Arborea Borja y Centelles Ponce de Leon Benavides Enriquez Toledo Salm-Salm Hurtado de Mendoza y Orozco Silva Gomez de Sandoval y Rojas Pimental y Osorio Luna Guzman Mendoza Aragon de la Cerda Enriquez Haro y Guzman." What it was found convenient to call him for short we are not informed.



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